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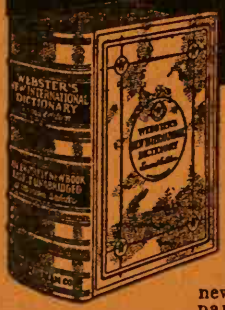

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A MAGAZINE OF LETTERS

Founded in 1889 by CHARLOTTE PORTER *and* HELEN A. CLARKE

JOHN HEARD, *Editor*

EDMUND R. BROWN, *Managing Editor*

VOLUME XLIII NUMBER 3

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POETRY'S GENII

AN ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

By Cale Young Rice

There are qualities in the rarest poetry so difficult to explain that many critics have ultimately given up the attempt. After paying due tribute to felicities of rhythm and diction, imagination and passion, they find something still unaccounted for. This something they content themselves with calling "inexplicable" or "miraculous," or even "unfathomable" and "divine." So baffling is its beauty that when asked to define poetry of this kind they can only do so in terms of praise—such as Blake's assertion that "it is one of the chief ways of conversing with Paradise" or Masefield's similar eulogy that it "is a flowing in of light from the Source of all light, from the King from whom comes all knowledge of the kingly." Or as another definition which won a prize puts it, poetry is

> A magic light that springs
> From the deep heart of things.

Panegyrics of this sort are often charming. They pay due honor to poetry. But unfortunately they have the effect of muddying the waters of critical understanding. More regrettably they lead to the widely accepted belief that poetry is not susceptible of satisfactory definition—a belief that affords shelter for more than unintentional confusion.

Similarly misleading are certain attitudes taken toward poetic values by A. E. Housman in his essay on poetry and previously by Emily Dickinson. Eschewing belief that poetry can be defined, Housman tells us that although he offers no definition he knows that certain lines *are* poetry if they "cause his beard to bristle" when recalled while shaving. Miss Dickinson, in her day, had avowed that she knew they were poetry "if they seemed to take the top of her head off when she read them."

In this article the author attempts to analyse the "inexplicable" in poetry. Incidentally, he seeks to dispose of some of the critical confusion to which that "inexplicability" has given rise.

If the author's thesis that the "genii" which help to perform "miracles" in the creation of poetry be accepted, a clearer understanding of why mystery exists in poetry—and perhaps in the other arts will result. At least we shall be less content to remain in our present state of muddle and obscurantism.—The Editor.

Such tests of poetic quality are of course interesting and suggestive. At bottom, however, they are as preventive of an acceptable definition of poetry as the semi-religious eulogies by Blake and Masefield. Useful as personal touchstones, they should not be permitted to divert us from believing that a satisfactory, impersonal, and objective definition of poetry can be framed.

In saying this and in suggesting that such a definition of poetry is obtainable, and that it should be based on an analysis of poetic phenomena, not upon an admiration of them, I must not be supposed to desire to reason away the beauty of the rainbow. Poetic inspiration is an indubitable fact, and such inspiration may in a real sense be called miraculous or even divine—if we believe in a Divinity. So no minimizing of its glory will be attempted here. What is offered will merely be a more searching analysis of "inexplicable" poetry from a different point of view together with certain clarifications. And since the problem of defining poetry should manifestly precede such an analysis, I approach it first.

During the first quarter of the twentieth century many critics of poetry took the position that a definition was unnecessary and that judging poetry was almost wholly a matter of personal preference—not one of applying standards. Even so astute a collater and observer of poetic phenomena as Mr. I. A. Richards has remarked that "there comes a point in all criticism where sheer choice has to be made without the aid of arguments, principles or rules."

This same quarter century was also characterized by revolt, not only against a decadent Romanticism which was failing to renew its vitality, but toward a Realism and a realistic freedom of technique so anarchic as to deny any particular difference between poetry and prose. For a decade or more reams of verse, often unimaginative, unimpassioned, and insufficiently rhythmical, were put forth under the mistaken impression that such free verse realism alone was equivalent to inspiration.

Only when there came a realization that if such verse were poetry anybody could be a poet did the situation reduce itself to absurdity. Coincidentally it became apparent that the creed of no definition of poetry and of no standards of judgment meant that no authoritative criticism was possible and that, consequently, critics of this school were merely destroying themselves. Their opinions might be more entertaining or better

written than others, but they were no more valid than the personal preferences of the mere tyro.

This admission was inescapable. But it also became clear that the critics of this school believed *their* dicta *were* authoritative. Their critical pronouncements continued to be *ex cathedra*—indicating that they still considered themselves capable of affording final guidance to their readers. Nor did some of them relinquish their position even after they realized that their "personal preference" standard of judgment afforded a blind for dishonest partisanship and self-interest.

That "preference" is an element in all poetic choice—as faith, according to Mr. A. J. Balfour, is the foundation of all belief—cannot, of course, be denied. It is a mistake, however, to regard personal preference as the *determining element.* Most people prefer beauty to ugliness, the true to the false, the noble to the base, and they judge accordingly. Yet since there comes a time when conventional imitations of the beautiful cause revolt to the ugly; when banality, in other words, brings a craving for the new in any form; or when the dully noble leads to a preference for the decadent, the revolt to the no standards idea readily arises.

Even so it is surprising that many revolters fail to see that the measure of our artistic sincerity and intelligence is not determined by revolt alone, but by the things *to which we revolt*—by what we are willing to preserve or destroy. For art may depend on exasperation rather than inspiration to break its bonds, but exasperation is not inspiration. And only extremists or propagandists who so consider it will ask us to believe that any radical prosiness articulated into lines is poetry above ultimate judgment and definition.

Our difficulty in agreeing upon a definition of poetry rests upon another fact—an unconscious assumption that such a definition must be *absolute*, and that since poetry *comes* mysteriously its definition must *remain* a mystery. But since nothing can be defined absolutely and since no definition need be mysterious, we can only ask that poetry be defined as satisfactorily as anything else. In other words, we must be content with such a relative definition as we ordinarily accept in other spheres of thinking.

All we are entitled to in fact, or all we need, is a definition rightly based on a consideration and analysis of poetic phenomena. Such a definition should present merely an adequate descriptive

delimitation, differentiating poetry from any other literary form with which it may be confused. It should be a working definition sufficient for all purposes except those of interpreting its metaphysical or philosophic nature or origin—if such a metaphysical origin is claimed for it.

Can such a definition be arrived at through analysis with any unanimity, as experts in other fields arrive at other definitions? I believe it can. But before offering a definition—preparatory to presenting what I have called the "genii" which perform poetic miracles—let me remind you that when analysed on its formal side poetry is primarily an art of word-rhythms, metrical or unmetrical, and that these rhythms differ from prose rhythms only in being more lyrically measured or organized. Also that, when *substance* is considered, poetry and prose have so many of the same qualities, such as passion, imagination, fancy, that prose may become poetry by being broken up lyrically into verse lines.

Still again, let me remind you, since "mere verse" is often mistaken for poetry, that the degree of originality, felicity, and intensity of the qualities of passion, imagination, rhythm, and so forth, which poetry possesses, determines the value of the poetry. For unless the lines we analyse possess some quality or qualities so rare as to appeal to real poetry experts, they will lapse into the limbo of "mere verse"—though it should be added that the experts of a generation may fail rightly to estimate a Shakespeare, as has happened; or that a great poet, like Byron, may underestimate a Wordsworth, a Shelley, or a Keats, in comparison with a Pope. Hence it becomes obvious that the power to judge poetry is not conferred by any general or special knowledge thereof.

A definition of poetry, then, should be framed in terms of rhythmic form and substance, and should describe and delimit poetry from the two literary forms with which it may be confused—prose on the one hand and "mere verse" on the other. For brevity's sake it should also be put into comprehensive terms; and the following definition is offered:

Poetry is the expression of our experience in word-rhythms more lyrically organized than those of prose and having some rare quality or qualities of passion, imagination, and so forth, that endow it with a permanency of appeal beyond that of mere verse.

This definition, it will be observed, avoids absoluteness. It is scientific, rather than concerned with the mooted metaphysical origin and nature of poetry. The words "having some perman-

ency of appeal" partly beg the question, but we must remember that every definition does so in part; since to define anything we must of necessity define it partly in terms of itself.

The acceptance of this, or of a similar definition, is not essential to the acceptance of our analysis of the "inexplicable" in poetry; but it should indicate that our argument will not be merely personal or speculative.

That a part, though only a small part, of the inexplicable in poetry is due to felicities or subtleties of rhythm, form, diction, or what not, may be acknowledged at once. But that these rather easily analysable qualities can be primarily responsible for the inexplicability we meet in poetry must certainly be doubted, in spite of the present consensus of opinion to the contrary. Rather, we must believe that there are certain fundamental mysteries in the materials of poetry which act as do what our title calls "genii," in creating the poetry-miracles that baffle us.

Many of those who regard art-miracles as due to some technical skill quite apart from the content of aesthetic experience will doubtless take issue with this statement. The evidence and argument I shall offer will, I trust, prove convincing.

As it is with the mysterious or inexplicable side of poetry especially we are concerned, this exposition must begin with an indubitable assertion about mysteries in general: the assertion that the greatest of all mysteries which vex our thinking is the mystery that anything exists at all. And this is not a mystery confronting human beings alone. God's existence, to God, must be as mysterious as our existence, or the existence of anything, to us. No omniscience with which He can conceivably be endowed can obviate that truth; no belief that He alone *was* in the beginning. It holds whether we believe He *created* the universe of time, space, mind, and matter, or believe they were coordinate with Him from the beginning.

Second in the order of all mysteries is another even more puzzling to us. It is that the ultimate aspects of existence as we see it are time, space, mind, and matter—and that all these four are incomprehensibly *infinite.*

An exploration of the various philosophies of Idealism, Materialism, Monism, Vitalism, and so forth is not necessary to prove this assertion, if indeed it requires proof. It will suffice to call attention to the fact that the four always *seem* really infinite—if immanent Mind be admitted in the universe—and that, if we blend these four infinites into a conceptual Whole, they

become a mystery so stupendous and sublime that nothing comparable can be conceived for poetic or philosophic purposes.

This is the crux of our reasoning and it leads immediately to a question. Do these mysterious infinites of time, space, mind, and matter play any vital part in causing the mysterious "inexplicability" so often found in poetry? Or, put otherwise, can they be the "genii" which perform the miracles that seem to exist in the rarest poetry?

In dealing with this question it must be kept in mind that we are dealing only with poetry of the kind that seems "inexplicable," and not with the kind we feel we can sufficiently analyse by considering rhythm, meter, diction, and the like. And the difference between poetry of the "inexplicable" kind and ordinary good poetry may here be illustrated, though in quoting we shall have to draw more heavily at first on the past—on lines which have long been admitted as inexplicable.

Take first two lines from Shakespeare:

> Heat not a furnace for your soul so hot
> That you do singe yourself.

Or these from Shelley:

> Most wretched men
> Are cradled into poetry by wrong:
> They learn in suffering what they teach in song.

Each of these quotations is unquestionably poetry and each is as surely not poetry of a kind to bewilder and baffle explanation. We see their aptness, their truth, their figurativeness, and we feel that we sufficiently understand them. Had no rarer lines flowered in the fields of poetic literature we should not only have found all poetry easily analysable, but should never have floundered in a bog of doubt about defining and explaining it.

But lines that have a far more mysterious effect upon us are to be found in the work of almost every important poet. They may seem as simple and ordinary in their utterance as those just quoted, but they move or bewitch us incalculably more. Witness another from Shakespeare,

> After life's fitful fever he sleeps well.

and recall the profound emotion it stirs in those who have endured this troubled world. Or witness these, often praised, from *Atalanta in Calydon:*

Before the beginning of years
There came to the making of man
Time with a gift of tears,
Grief with a glass that ran.....

From what source does the vastly more unanalysable effect of such lines come? Their rhythm, diction, imaginativeness, are no more complex or inexplicable than are the first quoted lines of Shakespeare and Shelley. Yet we feel at once that they belong to the kind of poetry we call "unfathomable."

Our answer to this age-old problem can now be offered. These lines differ from ordinary lines of poetry in having sprung out of our sense of one of the four fundamental mysteries of existence—the mystery of infinite time. The few simple words of the line "After life's fitful fever he sleeps well" give not only a sense of the tragedy of finite being, but of our finiteness plunged into the endless unawaking sleep of death. Similarly the first ines of the Swinburne quotation

Before the beginning of years,
There came to the making of man

carry us back profoundly through infinite time with a phrase, while the two ensuing lines overwhelm us with the thought that the incomprehensible stretch of time has been inexplicably preparing our "grief" and "tears." For time, which we experience for our brief moment, has moved from eternity and will move on to eternity after we are no more. We measure it with heartbeats or with light years. One pulse of it is infinite bliss or infinite tragedy. It heals or destroys, and we know not how or why. That its mystery, therefore, should have impregnated countless lines of the rarest poetry is not strange. Nor will it be strange if we find upon further examination that its infinite mystery is one of the "genii" chiefly responsible for the bewildering quality of much of the world's rarest poetry.

Consider this passage:

We are such stuff
As dreams are made on; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

Death's, and so time's, infinitude is here again, but accented in addition by the word "rounded," suggesting the circle, a symbol of infinity for many peoples.

An even more bewildering example is this, in which we almost see the genie of the time-infinite at work:

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death.

A gentle melancholy embodiment of the full pathos of this infinite pervades Gray's *Elegy*, where always

The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Without the time-infinite, indeed, this *Elegy* would never have had its universal sway over generations.

Recall the famous lines of Wordsworth's great *Intimations of Immortality* ode and observe the part the time-genie has played in its inspiration:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting.
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting
And cometh from afar.

Also associate that passage with the seeming *pause* of time in

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free.
The holy time is quiet as a nun
Breathless with adoration.....

Both of these examples invoke not only the time-infinite, but also the space-infinite, to be considered later.

With Coleridge time often becomes a supernatural thing. But *The Ancient Mariner*, *Kubla Khan*, and *Christabel* afford amazing illustrations of the mystery with which the time-infinite endows poetry. As, however, these illustrations especially involve the space-infinite, quotations from them will be reserved until we consider the latter.

The pages of Shelley are strewn with lines that vividly support our emerging theory. Indeed one can hardly say the name of Shelley without feeling a sense of infinite time and space. But as it is he who, almost more than any other poet, conceives infinite time and space to be filled with living mind and matter, he, with several other poets, will be extensively discussed later. Here only the simplest lines in which he embodies the time-infinite will be proffered:

We look before and after
And pine for what is not.

That no poet ever had a more poignant sense of the time-infinite's mystery or expressed it more perfectly than did Keats can be averred with little fear of refutal. The odes *To a Night-*

ingale and *On A Grecian Urn* have caught the very quintessence of that poignance:

> Thou wast not born for death, Immortal Bird!
> No hungry generations tread thee down;
> The voice I heard this passing night was heard
> In ancient days by emperor and clown;
> Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
> Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
> She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
> The same that oft times hath
> Charmed magic casements opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas in faery lands forlorn.

Or, from the Grecian Urn ode,

> Thou foster child of Silence and slow Time

which

> dost tease us out of thought
> As doth eternity.

But Keat's sense of time and space in creating the "inexplicable" in poetry will also be discussed more extensively with the group of the greater exemplars of our theory.

Of Whitman, as of Shelley, one can hardly think without feeling the breath of the time and space infinites. For the great American singer is deeply saturated with their vastities—though sometimes exaggeratedly, fantastically or self-consciously.

> Afar down I see the first Nothing, I know I was there. . . . . .
> Immense have been the preparations for me. . . . . .
> Cycles ferried my cradle, rowing and rowing like cheerful boatmen,
> For room for me, stars kept aside in their rings,
> They sent influences to look after what was to hold me.

But in Whitman the poignancy of infinitely passing time is not often so tragic as in Keats. His imagination is sometimes merely ecstatic over its passing, as indeed it is likely to be over everything—including death.

Browning usually felt the time-mystery as the mystery of the infinite in the moment:

> Fool! All that is at all
> Lasts ever past recall;
> Earth changes but thy soul and God stand sure.
> What entered into thee
> That was, is and shall be.
> Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter and Clay endure.

Or,

Just when I seemed about to learn!
Where is the thread now? Off again!
The old trick! Only I discern—
Infinite passion and the pain
Of finite hearts that yearn.

That is the human mind and heart at a moment's evanescence in the midst of infinity.

From every source illustrations of the role the time-genie assumes in endowing poetry with "inexplicability" might be summoned. Often the effect produced is half concealed by a word—as in Keats's line "poor weak palsy-stricken churchyard thing," where "churchyard" gives us the whole length of death—together with grief and the hope and doubt of immortality. Often in a whole poem, such as Fitzgerald's and Omar's masterpiece, the magical protagonist is the keen sadness of tasting life between two eternities. Ernest Dowson presents us with an exquisite illustration of this:

They are not long, the weeping and the laughter,
Love and desire and hate.
I think they have no portion in us after
We pass the gate.

They are not long, the days of wine and roses:
Out of a misty dream
Our path emerges for a while, then closes
Within a dream.

The Book of Job is an immortal quarry for our argument:

Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, . . .
Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . .
When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of
God shouted for joy. . . . . .

a passage to be quoted more fully later in illustrating the space-mystery.

Blake cries:

To see a world in a grain of sand
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
And eternity in an hour

and not only do the time and space genii again make a miracle of the poetry, but in consequence of these lines, and especially of the phrase "eternity in an hour," we have also much of whatever is important in Emily Dickinson, another devotee of our "genii."

In Matthew Arnold's pages one will at once recall *Philo-*

mela dissolved in a grievous sense of the stretch of time and with her song reaching back,

after many years in distant lands

to

Lone Daulis in the high Cephissian vale,

and on ever through

Eternal passion!
Eternal pain!

Also the deservedly famous *Requiescat* is quotable for our thesis:

Her cabined, ample Spirit,
It fluttered and failed for breath.
Tonight it doth inherit
The Vasty Hall of Death.

In that last line lies infinity frozen.

The time and space genii have served Tennyson admirably in helping to create the enchantment of portions of *Crossing the Bar*. More marvellously has the time-infinite acted in Swinburne's *The Garden of Proserpine*, which after unforgettable stanzas rounds to an unforgettable close:

Then star nor sun shall waken,
Nor any change of light;
Nor sound of waters shaken,
Nor any sound or sight;
Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,
Nor days nor things diurnal;
Only the sleep eternal
In an eternal night.

In the more inexplicable passages of classic American poetry we can gather an equal amount of evidence for the truth of our theory. First, the celebrated close of *Thanatopsis:*

So live that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan, which moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry slave at night,
.....but.....
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

Poe, like Coleridge, often uses a time and space that are evoked and supernatural rather than real,—a practice that will be dealt with later. But one instantly remembers the "in-

explicable" effect the refrain "nevermore" gives in *The Raven.*

Whitman, whom we cannot escape mentioning often, filled *When Lilacs Last In The Door yard Bloomed* with a sense of time and death "serenely arriving" throughout the universe, so that the poem's beauty seemingly becomes "unfathomable." Indeed so intoxicated is Whitman with the time and space infinites in this poem that death actually becomes for him "triumphantly" glamorous and desirable in its process—as desirable as life itself.

But next, the space infinite.

To conceive or realize infinite time we must look inward, feel its passing, and so infer its outward universality. To conceive infinite space we look outward and have all the immensity of the stellar universe to help us to a conception of its infinity. Space therefore is associated more easily with the material objects out of which imagination frames its images. Time is more akin to the unseen and unseeable inner and outer world.

For this reason the space mystery provides the poet more readily with the means for poetic magic than does the time mystery: though the means provided by the time mystery may, on the other hand, be more poignant. It is in space that we perceive light, color, form, and movement, which provide the poet's imagination with most of its raw materials. Infinite space awes or terrifies us; infinite time reminds us of our tragic helplessness and brevity.

Whether the space mystery has actually provided poetry with the majority of its seemingly unfathomable lines would require a more exhaustive investigation than has here been made. But that a sense of infinite space permeates a myriad of poetry's most mysterious lines is unquestionable to any observer, as plentiful quotation will show.

Shakespeare famously writes:

> To be imprisoned in the viewless winds
> And blown with restless violence round about
> The pendent world.

Or he has Lady Macbeth moan—and here the *seeming* infinite of the sea has the effect of an actual infinite upon us—

> Will all great Neptune's ocean wash the blood
> Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
> The multitudinous seas incarnadine.....

Still again the lines:

> Who would these fardels bear
> .....
> But that the dread of something after death,
> The undiscovered country from whose bourne
> No traveller returns

are extraordinarily illustrative of what the space-genie can do in creating. The word "bourne" alone leads us funereally into infinity. Though perhaps the "dread" Shakespeare here had in mind was not that of mere death, but also, shadowily, that of the punishment of lost souls.

The most quoted lines of Christopher Marlowe, through one word suggesting the space-mystery, add inexplicability to their beauty:

> Is this the face that launched a thousand ships
> And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?

Coming after the magnificent metonomy of the first line, that "topless towers" makes a marvel of both. And does not space work a similar wonder in the following much lauded pentameters of the great Marlowe?

> Oh, thou art fairer than the evening air
> Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars.

At Milton we will not pause here for especial quotation. Space and time infinites are of immense import in creating some of the otherwise unaccountable effects of *Paradise Lost*. But the space and time used there, as in *The Divine Comedy*, *The Ancient Mariner*, parts of *Prometheus Unbound*, and in certain other masterpieces, are supernatural or otherwise unreal.

No apter instance of the space-infinite's potency in producing mystery can be cited than the already mentioned Tintern Abbey lines of Wordsworth: though it should be noted that the mind and matter infinites have also taken part in this great utterance:

> A sense sublime
> Of Something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man—
> A motion and a spirit that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things.

A simpler example, however, is easy to find in the immortal Lake poet:

> A violet by a mossy stone
> Half hidden from the eye;
> Fair as a star when only one
> Is shining in the sky.

The leap from a violet to infinity is tenderly thrilling.

In *The Ancient Mariner* actual space as well as space that is half unreal is used at times, lending the lines their profound strangeness:

> The sun's rim dips, the stars rush out,
> At one stride comes the dark.....
>
> The moving moon went up the sky
> And nowhere did abide.

Or, from *Kubla Khan:*

> In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
> A stately pleasure dome decree,
> Where Alph the sacred river ran
> Through caverns measureless to man
> Down to a sunless sea.....

Such space seems magically, if not actually, infinite.

For Shelley all things, even God, are forever swimming in the boundless enigma of space:

> The awful shadow of some unseen Power
> Floats though unseen among us.

But as has been said, Shelley is too important for passing consideration. He must be taken up with special extensiveness further on. He too in parts of *Prometheus Unbound* and elsewhere resorts to unreal spaces, as does Keats in *Hyperion.*

Keat's use of the space-infinite appears beautifully in the Chapman's Homer sonnet:

> Then felt I like a watcher of the skies
> When a new planet swims into his ken.

Or here:

> Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art,
> Not in lone splendor hung aloft the night
> And watching with eternal lids apart
> Like Nature's patient, sleepless eremite.

The Blessed Damosel, Rosetti's richly sensuous lyric, with which perhaps Romanticism began to become a bit over-ripe and in need of renewal forces, is placed cunningly in the space-infinite and becomes mystically concrete:

> The blessed damozel leaned out
> From the gold bar of Heaven:
> Her eyes were deeper than the depth
> Of waters stilled at even.
> She had three lilies in her hand
> And the stars in her hair were seven.

Other stanzas of the poem even more effective might be cited. Blake exclaims:

> If the sun and moon should doubt
> They'd immediately go out.....

a profoundly startling hyperbole. And from Tennyson's *Ulysses* an apt illustration lies in the lines:

> The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks;
> The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs; the deep
> Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
> .....my purpose holds
> To sail beyond the sunset and the baths
> Of all the western stars.

Browning, caught in the web of the mystery of a musical chord, calls in the genie of infinite space to help him express it:

> And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to man,
> That out of three sounds he frame not a fourth but a star.

The mysterious growingness of spring—one of the *seeming* infinites—merges with the space-infinite in Swinburne's ever-bewildering Atalanta chorus, "When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces." After various other space-infinite lines come these:

> For the stars and the winds are unto her
> As raiment, as songs of the harp-player;
> For the risen stars and the fallen cling to her,
> And the southwest wind and the west wind sing.

Whitman must be quoted again here, though still *en passant.* A passionate animist, the space—as well as the time-genie ever comes at his command. In the midst of a universe conceived livingly, infinites, as we have said, were sometimes mere literary infinites to him and not linked with the specific joys or sorrows of men. The result was mere "cosmic" poetry, of which there is something in the following apostrophe to Earth. But there is also something more:

> O vast Rondure, swimming in space,
> Covered all over with visible power and beauty,
> Alternate night and day and the teeming spiritual darkness,
> Unspeakable high procession of sun and moon and the countless stars above,
> Below the manifold grass.....

But enough at the moment of quoting evidence for our theory of the potency of the space as well as time infinite in

producing poetic "miracles." Farther on living poets also will be called to the stand. For space and time are undeniably genii in producing "inexplicable" poetic effects.

It is of little consequence to us whether Anaxamander, the first to use the word "infinite" in dealing with the material world, had a conception of the extent of time, space and matter such as we have today. Nor does it matter that certain philosophers of today consider time and space "qualitative" rather than "quantitative" infinites. We shall always believe at bottom that both are ultimate realities and not illusions the finite intellect conjures up. Never shall we genuinely philosophize ourselves into thinking otherwise.

It will be remembered that in trying to show how the time and space infinites entered into the inexplicably rare lines of poetry, passages were offered that involved the matter infinite as well. We must now analyse that fact further.

Until more recent years, as everyone knows, matter was regarded as just matter—real hard atoms of it—and not as "dematerialized" electrical energy—organic, maybe with mind, as the new science of today conceives it. This new conception of matter has hardly had time to get itself into poetry, but the old conception of it as having vast extent and mass and weight, and as being acted upon by tremendously impressive and often tragic forces, has inspired poets from Job, Aeschylus, and Lucretius down to the present time. Before illustrating this I must pause to explain more fully what I have once or twice called "seeming infinites."

This term is one I have given to phenomena which impress our minds as being so comparatively vast or undefined as to *seem* to merge with one or the other of the four fundamental infinites. Spring, summer, autumn, winter, dawn, twilight, are seeming infinites, as also are winds, earthquakes and lightnings—which seem to extend infinitely around or under us when we are experiencing them. And these seeming infinites may naturally be called the *lesser* genii of poetry. They are not as effective in performing poetic miracles as the major four, but their spell and potency will at once be self-evident to those who have followed this argument. Here, however, we are only interested in them as they relate to infinite matter and its forces.

In *Prometheus Unbound* Shelley has personified the *seemingly* infinite forces of earthquakes, tempests, fires, floods,

into monstrous beings "from the all-miscreative brain of Jove"—who is the symbol of Omnipotence. And amazingly infinite do these forces seem in his description of them.

Prometheus exclaims:

> Earthquake fiends are charged
> To wrench the rivets from my quivering wounds,
> When the rocks split and close again behind:
> While from the loud abysses howling throng
> The genii of the storm, urging their rage
> Of whirlwind, and afflict me with keen hail.

Time itself becomes a force in this poem; for day and night lead

> The wingless crawling hours, one among whom
> —As some dark priest hales the reluctant victim—
> Shall drag thee, cruel king, to kiss the blood
> From these pale feet.....

Also Earth feels her living powers, and feels them *as* living:

> I am the Earth,
> Thy mother; she within whose stony veins,
> To the last fibre of the loftiest tree
> Whose thin leaves trembled in the frozen air
> Joy ran, as blood within a living frame.

And these mysterious powers extend even to the realm of the dead, where, Earth tells Prometheus,

> thou....dost hang, a writhing shade,
> Mid whirlwind-peopled mountains; all the gods
> Are there and all the powers of nameless worlds.....
> And Demogorgon, a tremendous gloom.

The mystery of these world powers is not felt so intensely *as powers*, or with such imaginative insight, by Shelley's contemporaries Wordsworth, Keats, and Byron. Nor indeed is the Will which works behind the world. Even Shakespeare, who probably had experienced little of the forces of nature, is inclined rather to harness such forces to the service of his dramatic ends than to be profoundly impressed by them. Of *Julius Caesar*, *The Tempest*, or even of *King Lear* this is so.

In *The Ancient Mariner* mysterious, seemingly infinite forces are at work on the Mariner's ship and crew, and they add movingly to the marvel of Coleridge's lines. But these powers are of a supernatural cast and so have not the convincing poetic effect upon us that real powers would have. This is true likewise of certain passages of Byron's *Manfred*.

Whitman, an ecstatic egoist in the presence of a universe in which theoretically for him all things were equally good and beautiful, had little sense of the dramatic. So it was infinite time, space and mind, rather than infinite or seemingly infinite power (or matter) that preoccupied him. So too the creator of the *Rubaiyat* rubs the lamp of his imagination and not only do the genii of time and space readily appear—

> Up from Earth's Centre through the Seventh Gate
> I rose and on the throne of Saturn sate.....

but Omar also passionately felt the struggle between Dust (Matter) and Soul (Mind). Yet Dust for him is inert, not instinctive with powers. The modern physicist conceives one atom as having more power than Omar sensed in the whole physical universe. The "Eternal Saki's" purposive *Mind* is the Persian bard's theme.

The truth is that until recent times power was the exclusive gift of the gods or of God, in whose hands matter or Nature was subservient. And no literature has so dynamically or sublimely expressed this play of Omnipotence as has the *Book of Job*:

> Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, . . .
> Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. . . .
> Whereupon are the foundations of it fastened, or who laid the cornerstone thereof,
> When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?
> Or who shut up the sea with doors when it brake forth as if it had issued out of the womb,
> When I made the clouds the garment thereof . . . and said,
> "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed!"
> Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days and caused the dayspring to know his place?.....
> Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? . . .
> Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?

All the infinites have been summoned by Job in this great passage.

But considering the vast amount of rare poetry that has in the past portrayed the powers of the universe, it is amazing that so little of it disassociated these (material) powers from Mind. In recent years Joseph Conrad, a supreme prose poet, has given us an overwhelming sense of a sinister material universe. John Masefield, following Conrad, sways us in *Dauber* with the infinite uprooted might of the sea. Mind is absent from the material immensities in that narrative, as it is in the similarly sinister work of Robinson Jeffers, the American. The consequence is that their powerful creative magic is steeped in dread, horror, and disillusion.

Turning to examples of the influence on poetry of the idea of the immanence of Mind or Spirit or Conscious Life through the universe, the reader may again be reminded first of Wordsworth's Tintern Abbey utterance.

Browning, among nineteenth century poets obsessed with the idea of God, did not fully reach the modern conception of the immanence of Mind in everything. For him it exists partly outside. It is the Potter and His clay idea with him even more than with Fitzgerald and Omar. His more "inexplicable" lines, such perhaps as some in *Meeting At Night* and *Parting At Morning* have rather the space than the mind mystery. Yet back of the rare charm of such poems as *A Toccata of Galuppi's*—which the time mystery dominates—is Mind:

> Yes, you. like a ghostly cricket, creaking where a house was burned;
> Dust and ashes, dead and done with, Venice spent what Venice earned.
> The soul doubtless is immortal—where a soul can be discerned.
> .....
> "Dust and ashes!" So you creak it, and I want the heart to scold.
> Dear dead women, with such hair, too: what's become of all the gold
> Used to hang and brush their bosoms? I feel chilly and grown old.

And the mind-infinite climaxes almost too many of Browning's other poems as it climaxes *In A Year:*

> Well, this cold clay clod
> Was man's heart:
> Crumble it and what comes next?
> Is it God?

It would seem indeed that the religious or theological spirit, rather than the philosophical or poetic, dominates so much of the verse that has dealt with Mind, or God, in the universe, that it is only in poets who are primarily poets and philosophers that we find the "inexplicable" lines with which we are concerned. To a consideration of a special few of those poets who have used not only the mind-mystery, but also those of space, time and matter merged with mind, we may now turn.

As a profound background-source of inspiration for any poet no conception is comparable to that of infinite time, space, matter and mind taken as a living organic Unity, hostile, indifferent, or beneficently inclined toward men. An imaginative and emotional apprehension of such a Unity, permeating all experience, will inevitably provide a creative mysteriousness and depth to poetic imaginings in any field of poetry. It will also endow poetic experience with that indispensable element of inspiration, a sense of growth (and decay) in all things.

Next to the apprehension of this fourfold Unity of infinites as a background-source will be the *seeming* infinites we have discussed. Winds, seas, earthquakes, gravitation, the growing powers of spring and summer, the destructive forces of autumn and winter, as well as numerically incalculable humanity, are even more than *seeming* infinites; for we must conceive them as existing in other planets similar in character to our own, if such planets exist—as is likely.

Possessing a full apprehension of these infinites and seeming infinites does not of course imply that a poet should deliberately commit himself to writing about them chiefly, or even at all. Specific "cosmic" themes in poetry are legitimate and will always be used; but they constitute only a small part of our experience and that part may be insignificant in comparison with the rest. What should be realized is that the poet who has a vital apprehension of the fundamental and subsidiary infinites is likely to know his relative place in the universe. He senses the depths, heights and powers around him and is not likely to mistake some small exclusively private fatuity of his experience for something of universal importance, or to regard some evanescent novelty of attitude disassociated from our common destiny as a matter of large and permanent consequence.

Of the poets, chiefly 19th century, who had the most remarkable sense of these infinites, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, and Whitman will now be especially considered. Blake, whose drawings as well as his poetry are suggestive for our theory (if it is applicable, as I believe, to the other arts) would also be significant. But this article must choose.

No one of these four especial poets was, perhaps, a pantheist of the Spinoza type; rather they were "panentheists," believers that God included the world in His being, but not the whole of it. That is mentioned to call attention to the fact that a poet may eliminate God from the universe and still possess a superb sense of the other three infinites. In thus omitting Mind or God, he is, however, likely to avenge himself for disbelief in such a Mind by attributing almost deliberate sinister powers to Nature, which consists presumably of matter, space and time.

It was the desire of Wordsworth and Coleridge, as expressed in the preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, to bring poetry back to common speech and to dealing with common things—a desire only Wordsworth achieved. But for Wordsworth one of the "common things" of life was living in infinite space and time suffused with

infinite Mind. An illustration of this other than those already quoted is apparent in two lines of the *Ode On Intimations of Immortality* in which man, and earth, are spoken of as being

> Haunted forever by the eternal Mind
> ....
> A Presence which is not to be put by.

So much indeed are these infinites a part of Wordsworth's poetic psychology that the trees, lakes and mountains about him hardly seem more so. It even strikes him as pathetic that Peter Bell cannot feel infinity in the primrose:

> The primrose by the river's brim
> A yellow primrose was to him
> And it was nothing more.

As he avowed in the closing lines of "The Simplon Pass" the workings of Nature were in fact to him

> Characters of the great Apocalypse,
> The types and symbols of Eternity,
> The first and last, and midst, and without end.

These infinites, or seeming ones, will even pass into a three years' old child, as in his Lucy poem:

> The floating clouds their state shall lend
> To her; for her the willow bend;
> Nor shall she fail to see
> Even in the motions of the storm
> Grace that shall mould the maiden's form.....

But of infinites other than Mind it is space, rather than time and matter (or force) that most impresses one in the "inexplicable" beauty of some of Wordsworth's rare lines. Take

> The winds come to me from the fields of sleep

which is as spacious as night itself. Or take those passages in which the sea, the dawn, the twilight and other seeming infinites were imbuing him:

> Her eyes as stars of twilight fair,
> Like Twilight's too her dusky hair;
> But all things else about her drawn
> From Maytime and the cheerful Dawn.

But leave Wordsworth and turn to Shelley, for whom space, time, Mind and matter were not such a *spiritual* Whole, yet whose apprehension of them was vaster—more philosophical, astrono-

mical and intense—especially where infinite Mind and matter were concerned. For both Mind and matter are "powers" with Shelley, unlimited powers inhabiting space and time, and endowing all manifestations everywhere with the feel of infinitude. For him the universe with its four-fold face is dynamic and dramatic. Time and space as well as Mind and matter are living and active, and play real roles in its destiny. Notice this fusion, in an inappropriate meter, in the exclamation of Prometheus:

> What's strange in my fate, if I suffer from hate
> At the moment I feel it?
> Let the locks of lightning, all bristling and whitening
> Flash, coiling me round,
> While the ether goes surging 'neath thunder and scourging
> Of wild winds endowed!
> Let the blast of the firmament whirl from its place
> The earth rooted below,
> And the brine of the ocean in rapid emotion
> Be driven in the face
> Of the stars up in heaven, as they walk to and fro.

Further along this perception of the fusion of space, mind and matter—and in a lesser degree of time—is rendered by "spirits" in a way that bewilders.

Again, in *Adonais*, after speaking of

> That Light whose smile kindles the Universe

he continues at the poem's end

> The breath whose might I have invoked in song
> Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven
> Far from the shore.....
> Whilst burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
> The soul of Adonais, like a star,
> Beacons from the abode where the eternal are.

To touch everything with the supernatural, and so with the powers of the infinites, is indeed so strong an inclination with Shelley that he transmits it to dead stones:

> ....Among the ruined temples there
> ....where marble demons watched
> The Zodiac's brazen mystery,
> He lingered, poring on memorials
> Of the world's youth.

But not only a great number of Shelley's most amazing lines, and not only the mythical "Prometheus Unbound," but many other whole poems by him are bathed in the space, time and matter and mind infinites, or seeming infinites, active and passive.

Among them are the *Ode to the West Wind*, *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*, *Mont Blanc*, *Stanzas Written In Dejection Near Naples*, *To Night*, and *Epipsychidion*. Infinitudes became a glorious obsession with him, so much so that he could not often keep his feet on earth. The universe as universe has in him perhaps its greatest poetic interpreter and perceiver, if not its supreme comprehender. Yet it should be repeated that in sensing the time-infinite Keats was his superior. Perhaps the disease which caused Keats to be haunted with a premonition of his early death was responsible for this. Anyhow in Shelley one nowhere finds such lines as:

> She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die,
> And Joy whose hand is ever at his lips
> Bidding adieu.

Or these, which Shelley never loved life sufficiently to pen:

> Ah happy, happy boughs that cannot shed
> Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu. . . .
>
> And, little town, thy streets forevermore
> Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
> Why thou art desolate can e'er return.

But in using the space-infinite—not to mention those of Mind and matter—Keats was equally far from rivaling the more impersonal Shelley—who was a poetic force unconscious that he was writing poetry, as Keats was not. For with Shelley it was never art for art's sake as with his younger contemporary. It was art for creation's sake, for life's sake. Keats even in the imagined space of his "Hyperion" is not really at ease and happy. And of the Mind and powers of the universe he has little or no realization; though to Shelley all these were as open books.

Whitman was literally and ecstatically bemused with the infinites—and seeming infinites—and this bemusement began early. In *Cabined Ships at Sea* are the lines:

> We feel the long pulsation, ebb and flow of endless motion
> The tones of unseen mystery, the vague and vast suggestions of the briny world, . . .
> The boundless vista and the horizon, far and dim . . .

A little later, in *Song of Myself:*

> I am he that walks with the tender and growing night,
> I call to the earth and sea half-held by the night,
> Press close bare-bosomed night—press close magnetic nourishing night!
> Night of the south winds—night of the large few stars!
> Still nodding night—mad naked summer night.

And it is here that attention should be called to Whitman's sense of livingness, of growth in the material infinite, a sense particularly strong with him.

In *Song of Myself* occurs also the celebrated passage, especially expressive of the mystery of the time and space infinites, beginning:

I open my scuttle at night and see the far-sprinkled systems,
And all I see, multiplied as high as I can cipher, edge but the rim of the farther systems.

Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking, the one great love-song Whitman wrote, presents the time and space infinites almost as poignantly as Keat's two finest odes. In it however love speaks through the mating of two birds:

Out of the cradle endlessly rocking,
Out of the mockingbird's throat, the musical shuttle,
Out of the ninth month midnight....
.....
From under the yellow half-moon late-risen and swollen as if with tears

so it magically opens. But the female bird disappears, killed perhaps, and the male is left lamenting piteously:

Low hangs the moon, it rose late,
It is lagging—Oh I think it is heavy with love.....
.....
O night! do I not see my love fluttering out among the breakers?
What is that little black thing I see there in the white?
.....
Low-hanging moon!
What is that dusky spot in your brown yellow?
O is it the shape, the shape of my mate!
O moon do not keep her from me any longer.

This pathos appears again, made marvellous by the stormy night and sea infinites, in *Tears*. And a consciousness of the unity of the time, space and matter infinites though a bit too cosmically expressed, is in *On the Beach at Night Alone:*

As the old mother sways to and fro singing her husky song,
As I watch the bright stars shining, I think a thought of the clef of the universes and of the future.

It is, however, in *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed*, Whitman's most satisfying as well as his most inexplicable masterpiece, that the time, space and matter infinites are blended with such tender, living, mournful marvellousness. A sense of the Mind infinite only is lacking and that is hardly missed, if indeed the sense of the near-infinite, spring, flowing up through all things, does not more than compensate for its absence. So intense is this sense of growth that even death is like a soothing

flow of life. The poem is one the world can never forget. It is the supreme acceptance of the universe, of death as well as of life. Those who refuse the easy, unreasoned optimism of Browning, who know the profound and perhaps ultimate tragedy of our earth, may be left unsatisfied philosophically with its grieving ecstasy. Also they may point to the fallacy in Whitman's acceptation of all things as equally good as but a part of his intoxication. But the enchantment of the poem must always prevail:

> When lilacs last in the dooryard bloomed,
> And the great star early drooped in the western sky in the night,
> I mourned and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.

The "great star," the "powerful western fallen star" (the dead Lincoln) is borne in his coffin, night and day, "over the breast of spring," in all that season's growing loveliness, until the voice of a gray-brown bird, another symbol, calls the immortal invitation:

> Come lovely and soothing death,
> Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
> In the day, in the night, to all, to each
> .....
> From me to thee glad serenades,
> .....
> and the huge and thoughtful night.
> The night in silence under many a star,
> The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose voice I know,
> And the soul turning to thee, O vast and well veiled death,
> And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.

But the Mind-infinite, lacking in the Lincoln elegy, is strongly present in *Passage to India:*

> Ah more than any priest, O soul, we too believe in God,
> But with the mystery of God we dare not dally.
> .....
> O Thou transcendent,
> Nameless, the fibre and the breath,
> Light of the light, shedding forth universes, thou centre of them,
> .....
> Thou pulse, thou motive of the stars, suns, systems,
> That, circling, move in order, safe, harmonious,
> Athwart the shapeless vastnesses of space,
> How should I think, how breathe a single breath, if, out of myself,
> I could not launch to those superior universes?

In spite of a philosophy that suggests paranoic sentimentality this passage has intense contact with the overwhelming mystery of universal Mind.

The modern mind has definitely and finally turned away from all meretricious supernatural machinery in literature. The con-

sequence is that many of the world's most celebrated masterpieces have thereby become partly invalidated.

This is true of various works of the great Greek dramatists, in which the theatrical gods of Olympus intrude. And it is especially true of some master works of Dante, Milton, Goethe, Shelley, Keats and other poets whose mythical figures disport in a time and space which also are mythical or unreal. The various rounds of Dante's *Inferno*, or the astral location of his Paradise, or of Milton's, have no believable existence for us and so lose something of the effect of genuine vastness. Consequently in an age of realities they are in danger of appearing somewhat as literary clap-trap, to the detriment of the poetry based on them.

Having obtained from science and philosophy a conception of a universe far more impressive than religious superstition or literary imaginings can construct, we are impatient of such concocted space and time fictions except when the poetry embodying them is so transcendent as to make us forget their unreality—as happens in scenes of some supernaturalistic masterpieces. Certain poets—I count myself among them—began seriously therefore to discard mythological time, space and characters as literary material at the close of the last century. We became aware, I think, that their unreality was one of the prime causes of the decadence of Romanticism—which need never become decadent as long as it deals with credibly possible realities.

The gain to literature of this disavowal should be clear. In place of the much overworked "supernatural" mysteries of mythological time, place and persons, we have the immensely more mysterious real infinites. And instead of the miracles of gods, goddesses and saints, the stranger miracles of the powers of man's subconscious mind. The transition is great and poets who have not taken full account of it have in that respect failed of modernity.

Romanticism in 19th Century poetry lasted practically a hundred years. There were tentative facings toward more reality and so toward realism during that time by a number of poets—especially by Whitman and Browning. But it was not until the close of the nineties that poets in England and America began to feel a necessity to react strongly toward more reality. Perhaps none of us wished to forsake romanticism, quite. That seemed unwise. The need was rather to relate poetry more actually to experience, and so to escape from outworn literary themes and language to an expression more contemporary, na-

tional or colloquial. To discover new fields of romance, not to discard it and so deprive ourselves of a wide realm of poetic inspiration, was perhaps the attitude taken.

The "Renaissance" of twentieth century poetry really began then much earlier than 1912, the date usually ascribed to it. A determination to use the prose syntax of natural speech began, before the last century ended, with Housman, Kipling, Yeats and with some of us in America whose careers opened in the late nineties. This approach toward greater reality ended later in a dominant realism. But the poets who *pioneered* this realism did not disavow romanticism or classicism when used advisably. The essential characteristic of the modernity of twentieth century poetry therefore lies in its return to an abiding respect for sincere realities rather than in committing itself to the later and narrower creed of sheer realism and lesser *isms* which sprang from it.

The meaning of this for our discussion is that the rarest lines of poetry, the most inexplicable ones, are first of all poetic rather than merely romantic, realistic or classic. Perhaps it is possible to assert and maintain that the spirit of romance, which is the spirit of the strangely beautiful, the wonderful, the mysterious, has been more inspiring to poets than the more cerebral appeal through truth, which is that of realism. Perhaps also it can be said even more successfully that the spirit of romantic-realism is even more desirable for the performance of poetic "miracles." The greater poets, led by Shakespeare, find both the ordinary and the extraordinary marvellous and poetically exciting. Therefore in quoting more recent and contemporary poets to reinforce our theory of the genii responsible for the inexplicable in poetry, we shall quote realists, romanticists and classicists alike.

Francis Thompson, though reaching into the 20th Century, was hardly a modern or even a Victorian. He never escaped the superb magnetism and magnificence of the Elizabethans—even in his prose canonization of Shelley. His most bewildering lines (and some of them are incomparable) thoroughly involve a sense of the space and time infinites. *The Hound of Heaven* in particular is a flight *through* an infinite, outer and inner, *from* an infinite:

> I fled Him down the nights and down the days,
> I fled Him down the arches of the years;
> I fled Him down the labyrinthine ways
> Of my own mind.
> .....
> Across the margent of the world I fled
> And troubled the gold gateways of the stars.....

From the majestic *Ode to the Setting Sun*, which is almost deified as the source of our life and light, we have similarly:

> It is the falling star that trails the light . . .
> And all our chants but chaplet some decay.

Or that time-infinite line:

> And vex the heels of all the yesterdays.

Stephen Phillips, who still clung to the mythologies (as did W. B. Yeats and others of the nineties) did not always reach the note of authentic personal sincerity modernity demands. He was literarily conscious of vastities, but often failed of expressing the infinities we feel in simple experience. Mythologies led his fine imagination into constructing supernatural spaces—*Christ In Hades* being an example.

Many lines from this poem and from *Marpessa* might be cited for our argument. But instead consider these from the more poignantly sincere *A Poet's Prayer*—in time of failing inspiration:

> That I have felt the rushing wind of Thee,
> That I have run before thy blast to sea
> .....
> When I am wrapt in hurry to the stars.

W. E. Henley, another exemplar of the nineties, felt the breath of advancing realism. But his two most "unaccountably" appealing poems are Romantic, as well as wrought through the space and time Infinites:

> Out of the night that covers me,
> Black as the Pit from Pole to Pole
> I thank whatever gods may be
> For my unconquerable soul.

And:

> Or ever the knightly years were gone
> From the old world to the grave,
> I was a king in Babylon
> And you were a Christian slave.

William Watson carried a sense of the space-infinite with him strongly into his famous poetic critique of Wordsworth:

> Not Milton's keen translunar music thine,
> Not Shakespeare's cloudless boundless human view,
> Not Shelley's flush of rose on peaks divine,
> Nor yet the wizard twilight Coleridge knew.

The space-infinite of Kipling's *L'Envoi* will at once occur to the reader. Also the seeming space and Mind infinites of many other lines, such as these from *The Deep Sea Cables:*

> Here in the womb of the world—here on the tie-ribs of earth
> Words, and the words of men, flicker and flutter and beat—
> Warning, sorrow and gain, salutation and mirth—
> For a Power troubles the Still that has neither hands or feet.

In *The Feet of the Young Men*, with its "Four way Lodges" opened, its "Hunting Winds" loose, its "old Spring-fret" arriving, and its "Red Gods" calling us to the far ends of the earth, there is also the mysterious suffusion of the space-infinite. Likewise remember the "everlasting whisper" in *The Explorer:*

> Something hidden. Go and find it. . . .
> Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost and waiting for you. . . .

It should be observed, however, that the seeming infinites, rather than the four fundamental ones, Mind excepted, chiefly occupy Kipling at his most inexplicable.

Stevenson's one certain bid for immortality is a perfect illustration of our theory:

> Under the wide and starry sky,
> Dig the grave and let me lie.
> Glad did I live and gladly die
> And I laid me down with a will.

A. E. Housman's memorable volume *A Shropshire Lad* might have been quoted before this as evidence. For Housman has been called the first of the moderns chronologically. And that is a sufficiently just distinction, though historical position in literature is too often mistaken for final literary importance. Yet the realism of Housman is often enough romantically sentimental about death and its unending sleep; as much so as Keats's. The *Shropshire Lad* is but an unconscious desire for death, disguised often by rare irony. But not only was Housman a realist. He was also among the first again to discard literary diction and its mannerisms for direct prose syntax—which for him meant especially Anglo-Saxon speech. Early in his volume comes the pathos of the evanescent temporal as set against eternity:

> And since to look at things in bloom
> Fifty springs are little room,
> About the woodlands I will go
> To see the cherry hung with snow.

Irony has not touched those lines; nor yet these:

Clay lies still, but blood's a rover;
Breath's a ware that will not keep.
Up, lad; when the journey's over
There'll be time enough for sleep.

But a little later on we find:

If the heats of hate and lust
In the house of flesh are strong,
Let me mind the house of dust
Where my sojourn shall be long.

For there,

Lovers lying two and two
Ask not whom they sleep beside,
And the bridegroom all night through
Never turns him to the bride.

A sharper example of the potency of the space and time infinites with Housman is:

Wanderers eastward, wanderers west,
Know you why you cannot rest?
'Tis that every mother's son
Travails with a skeleton.

Then,

Before the fire of sense decay,
The smoke of thought blow clean away,
And leave with ancient night alone
The steadfast and enduring bone.

This distinguished precursor of modern irony and pessimism, it should be noted, is much engrossed here as elsewhere with the eternity of the material world.

From the first volume that brought W. B. Yeats fame to his later ones the space and time genii have often been at his elbow. *The Hosting of the Sidhe*, a poem placed first in *The Wind Among the Reeds*, might be quoted whole as a rushing of the Sidhe through the infinite. *The Everlasting Voices*, printed next it is equally magical with space and time vasts. Recall the first lines, repeated at the poem's end:

O sweet everlasting voices be still;
Go to the guards of the heavenly fold
And bid them wander obeying your will
Flame under flame, till Time be no more.

And are not the space and time genii responsible for the "inexplicable" element of beauty in:

> The years like great black oxen tread the world,
> And God the herdsman goads them on behind,
> And I am broken by their passing feet.

Or in:

> I hear my soul drop down into decay,
> And Mananam's dark tower, stone by stone,
> Gather sea-slime and fall the seaward way,
> And the moon goad the waters night and day,
> Till all be overthrown.

This is defeatist verse, like Housman's, but everywhere in Yeats the infinites or seeming infinites present us with marvels.

John Masefield, who is at his most powerful in *Dauber*, conceives the infinite of space there as scourged by seeming'y infinite material powers; so the "inexplicable" in poetry again occurs:

> And the sea sighed and the fog rose up sheer,
> A wall of nothing at the world's last edge.
> .....
> .....
> The sky went out, the waters disappeared.

But to follow the splendidly portrayed course of the dauber's ship through the seeming infinite of uprooted sea and uprooting storm would be superfluous. Nor need the seeming infinites in the more sentimental *Sea-Fever*, *The West Wind*, the *Sorrows of Mydath* be mentioned. Or even those two sonnets which begin respectively "Flesh, I have knocked at many a dusty door," and "There on the darkened deathbed, dies the brain." Painfully pessimistic, they are ineffable utterances embodying the time-infinite: death, dissolution of mind and body, then eternal dust being that infinite's progression.

One of the most effective achievements of Alfred Noyes—one too little known by those who have only dispraise for him—portrays the defeated Napoleon in the clutch of the infinites and seeming infinites. On St. Helena, in *A Night at St Helena*, the fallen emperor groans:

> The wandering seas of memory rise and cry:
> And there is nought, within me or without,
> But flying clouds and ghostly waves that rise
> In wailing crowds out of the deep sea gloom.

Then, later:

> When I come alone
> The forces of the world are on my side,
> The pitiless powers that feed the sun with fire,
> Direct the wheeling planets and control
> The invincible countermarching of the stars.

Ralph Hodgson is wholly caught in the net of the infinites in his much-praised *Song of Honor*. Not the poem's enchanting first lines, but passages that give its full meaning are cited here. And it will be seen at once how far our genii have taken command:

> I heard it all, I heard the whole
> Harmonious hymn of being roll
> Up through the chapel of my soul
> And at the altar die.....
>
> I stood upon that silent hill
> And stared into the sky until
> My eyes were blind with stars, and still
> I stared into the sky.

Turning to the recent contemporary American scene the evidence for us is everywhere as clear and plentiful. Space effects in Emily Dickinson, who derives so manifestly from the gnomic transcendentalism of Blake and Emerson, are sometimes in reverse, as in the lines:

> Elysium is as far as to
> The very nearest room.....

But time and space mysteries are as often her intimates.

A later poet, William Vaughn Moody, might have risen higher had he, in his longer flights, been content with natural rather than supernatural Miltonic spaces, for which he forsook Gloucester Moors. What the space-infinite did for his inspiration in *Gloucester Moors* the first lines of the poem show:

> Here where the moors stretch free
> In the high blue afternoon
> Are the marching sun and talking sea,
> And the racing winds that wheel and flee
> On the flying heels of June.

The "bewildering" quality in Edwin Arlington Robinson's poetry is declared by some of his critics to be psychological rather than poetic. But that is surely not so with *Calverly* in the creation of which our genii have participated:

We cannot have them here with us
To say where their light lives have gone,
Or if they be of other stuff
Than are the moons of Ilion.
So, be their place of one estate
With ashes, echoes and old wars,
Or ever we be of the night
Or we be lost among the stars.

Similarly of Robert Frost. A colloquial psychology sprung of the soil of New England may account in part for the attraction of such poems as *The Death of the Hired Man.* But two lines that are invariably quoted from that poem as proof of its *poetic* quality are rooted in the space-infinite:

Part of a moon was falling down the west
Dragging the whole sky with it to the hills.

And a similar thing may be said of *The Road Not Taken*, another rare poetic utterance:

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood and I—
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

If the *Renascence* of Edna St. Vincent Millay has never been equalled by her, perhaps her youthful vision of what infinite time and space mean has never recurred to her with the same intense and comprehensive dread, followed by the sense of relief infinite Mind can give. When released from the "awful weight" of infinity in the grave she cries:

The world stands out on either side
No wider than the heart is wide;
Above the world is stretched the sky,
No higher than the soul is high.
The heart can push the sea and land
Farther away on either hand;
The soul can split the sky in two,
And let the face of God shine through.
But East and West will pinch the heart
That cannot keep them pushed apart;
And he whose soul is flat—the sky
Will cave in on him by and by.

From the more extreme realists, as well as from many other poets whose lines I reluctantly omit only because they have not had the luck to be popularly established as "inexplicable," passages of equal convincingness might be passed in review. It will be recalled, for instance, that Carl Sandburg is considered to be at his most rarely poetic in *The Cool Tombs:*

When Abraham Lincoln was shovelled into the tombs, he forgot the copperheads and the assassin. . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs.

The time-genie again!. . . . And it is the time and space genii who are servitors to Vachel Lindsay's art in the Altgeld poem so often defensively cited:

Sleep softly, eagle forgotten. . . under the stone.
Time has its way with you there and the clay has its own.

The Spoon River Anthology's poetic momentousness lies to a great extent in the momentary resurrection of the little town's varied folk, who "all, all lie sleeping on the hill." Briefly they explain themselves only to lapse back into the infinitely inexplicable.

The space-genie is quite as much in control of T. S. Eliot's modernistic simile at the beginning of *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock:*

Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table.

And to what lines in "The Waste Land" are skeptics of the poetic quality of that much discussed poem always referred in refutation? To these, which the infinites and near-infinites have influenced:

Phlebas the Phoenician, a fortnight dead,
Forgot the cry of gulls and the deep sea swell
And the profit and loss.
A current under sea
Picked his bones in whispers. As he rose and fell
He passed the stages of his age and youth
Entering the whirlpool.

But for final evidence of our theory consider one poet in whose lines the apprehension of the time, space and matter infinites is especially strong. This is Robinson Jeffers, in whom, however, the Mind infinite is lacking. So violently is this poet inclined to eliminate the M nd infinite as a fundamental of the Universe's mystery that one rather suspects his atheism as belonging rather to a day when to be atheistic was to be "scientific" or "advanced;" though there may be those who think such lines as the following lose nothing by the omission:

To labor eighty years in a notch of eternity is nothing too tiresome,
Enormous repose after, enormous repose before the flash of activity.
Surely you have never dreamed the incredible depths were prologue and epilogue merely
To the surface play in the sun, the instant of what is called life.

That is not mere "cosmic" imagining, for Jeffers is dramatic and the drama of the human race ever concerns him. Nor is this:

> the clapping blackness of the wings of pointed cormorants, the great sails
> Of autumn pelicans, the gray sea-going gulls
> Alone will streak the enormous opal, the earth have peace like the broad water, our blood's
> Unrest have doubled to Asia and be peopling
> Europe again, or dropping colonies at the morning star.

A simpler passage from this powerful poet and one whose lines break more evenly is:

> Then a white twilight grew about the moon and above
> The ancient waters the everlasting repetition of dawn.

For Whitman, as we have said, everything was good, infinitely good. For Jeffers, his modern follower, everything is infinitely sinister if not bad. There is no Mind striving to organize the universe with its mysterious Power. Rather the forces of matter are hostile and disturbing.

This has, of course, both gain and loss. A malevolent mindless universe has dramatic possibilities for inexplicable poetry, if the poet be not too inclined to make the universe the villain of the piece. If he be so, he is likely to leave man, weakened and corrupted by too many odds against him, defeated and unheroic in all respects, as are all Mr. Jeffers' characters. In that case transcendence of misfortune, which since Aristotle has seemed essential to truly satisfying tragedy, is lacking. And one is disposed to consider the sinister quality with which Mr. Jeffers and others endow the universe, in place of a God, as merely a vestigial belief in a Devil.

In so far as the "fundamental" infinites are concerned the argument of these pages has, perhaps, been sufficiently presented. It might be reinforced, however, by an analysis of "near-infinite" lines, especially as the near-infinites dominate most poets most of the time. Such an analysis would also make it apparent that our most profound experiences drive us into the realm of vastities which awe and overwhelm us—or lift us "out of sense"—and so charge us creatively with their quality.

This near-infinites or "lesser genii" analysis cannot be made here, but one question should be asked. Can a full enumeration of them be made?

Perhaps not. Perhaps it is sufficient to say merely that there are many phenomena related to infinite time, space, mind, and matter that *seem* so extensive or mysterious as to endow

poetry dealing with them with something boundlessly mysterious. Of these phenomena a large number, to be sure, might be classified into a hierarchy with the fundamental infinites at the top—or bottom; and such a classification would have a suggestiveness for the creative faculty in producing "unanalysable" poetic effects—which is always a part of artistic desire.

But the important thing for any poet is not to have a catalogue of the greater or lesser mysteries of the universe. Rather it is to have a deep and unfailing sense of them. For without such a sense wonder atrophies and disillusion ensues. And disillusion—the basis soil of so many contemporary *isms*—is a particularly poor soil for a poet, young or old, to plow. It will yield but a brief and lean harvest, as we are just now learning.

Finally let me say that if poetry is to be considered as having a metaphysical origin much might be added concerning both its definition and the genii here interpreted.

AMBER OF KOENIGBERG

By MARGARET WARD

A sleek beast I stand here,
Of carven amber clear.
Within me always roam
Strange seas of yellow foam.

Ten thousand years ago
I saw weird sunsets glow
On deep hot jungle slime—

And then came cold blue snow.

I sank from glacial heights,
Into the endless nights
Of a deep warm tropic sea,
And silken sands loved me.

An aeon and not one year
It took to make me clear.

TRISTRAM THE JESTER

ADAPTED AND TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF ERNST HARDT
BY JOHN HEARD*

CHARACTERS

MARK, *King of Cornwall*
ISEULT *of Ireland, Mark's wife*
BRANGAENE, *Iseult's lady*
PARANIS, *Iseult's page*
LORD DENOVALIN
LORD DINAS *of Lidan*
LORD GANELUN
UGRIN, *Mark's Jester*
STRANGE JESTER, *Disguise of Tristram of Lyonesse*
STRANGE LEPER, *Disguise of Tristram of Lyonesse*

ALSO: *Gaelic Barons. Ewan the King of the Lepers. The Lepers of Lubine, a Herald, the Executioner, Guards, the Strange Knight, Knights, Men-At-Arms, and a group of the inhabitants of the town.*
SCENE: *The Castle of St. Lubine*

ACT I

ISEULT'S APARTMENT AT ST. LUBINE

SCENE: *A curtain hung from the ceiling cuts off one-third of the room. This third is raised one step above the rest of the floor. The background is formed by a double bay-window through which may be seen the tops of some pine trees. In front of a couch, on a small table, stands a large gold shrine in which rests the magic brachet Peticriu, a toy of jewels and precious metals. Beside it stands a burning oil torch. The remaining two-thirds of the room are almost empty. A table stands in the foreground; on the floor lies a rug on which are embroidered armorial designs. In the middle and at both sides are wide double doors.* ISEULT *sits on the couch before the shrine. She is clad in a fur-trimmed robe.* BRANGAENE *loosens her hair which is divided into two braids. The cold, gray light of dawn brightens gradually; the rising sun falls on the tops of the trees, coloring them with a flood of red and gold.*

*With the exception of Act III, which has been materially changed, the general structure of the original version of the play has been kept. In the matter of the text a good deal of the wording has been modified; some speeches lengthened, some omitted, some added. A few minor characters and the "extras" used to make up crowds and to fill the stage have been eliminated.

Shortly before the outbreak of the Great War the two highest German dramatic honors were awarded to this play("Tantris der Narr"in the original and then contemporary). In the same year it received both the Kaiser Preis—for the best drama of the year—and the Volks-Schiller Preis—given once in three years for the best drama produced in the preceeding three year period. It was successfully performed on several of the National German Stages. (John Heard)

ISEULT (*singing*).

Brachet of topaz and em'rald,
Oh, brachet of rubies and gold,
Once made by the mighty Urgan
In Avalun's shadowy wold.

Oh, rubies and gold-set em'ralds
When wrought in the dim of night
Have magical power of aid
For lovers in sorrowful plight!

Sir Tristram slew mighty Urgan,
Sir Tristram the loving, the true.
And mindful of sorrowing lovers
He carried away Peticriu.

Sir Tristram, the tender and valiant,
Sir Tristram, the noble and high,
Once gave me this bringer of solace
Lest weeping and grieving I die.

Sir Tristram, my friend, is unfaithful,
God's anger on him shall descend;
Though cruelly he hath betrayed me
My love, even death cannot end.

And Death in his kiss shall return me
The love Life has stolen away.
The love of the dead is compelling
And binds till the uttermost day.

(*She stops singing, and says sadly*)

He will be mine once more when both are dead....

(ISEULT *stands up, extinguishes the light, and, flooded by her hair, steps to the window.* BRANGAENE *opens a chest from which she takes robes, combs, a mirror and several small boxes. She prepares a small dressing table.*)

ISEULT.

The dawn flows like the tide across the land;
And from the trees' storm-shattered tips there fall
A thousand drops into the moss below,
That seem as many sparks, all cold and bright.
Each day is followed by another one,

And then another day, and after each
Comes night. Thus runs my life's long chain of beads,
All black and white, endless, and all the same.
(*She turns and throws off her cloak.*)
Give me my new white cloak, and comb my hair,
I pray, Brangaene. Oh, it aches!

(BRANGAENE *throws a cloak over her shoulders.* ISEULT *sits down at the dressing table while* BRANGAENE *combs her hair, dividing it into strands and throwing it, as she combs it, over* ISEULT'S *shoulder.*)

BRANGAENE.

The comb
Glides like a ship whose narrow keel can find
Nor shore nor bottom in this yellow sea.
I never saw thy hair so full, Iseult,
Nor yet so heavy! See, the golden gold.

ISEULT. It aches—!

BRANGAENE.

And here it's damp as though last night
In silent darkness it had drunk of tears.

ISEULT.

I wonder if Sir Tristram spent last night
By his new bride; if he bestowed on her
Those names of sweetness which he made for me,
And lying on her couch told tales of me
That made her laugh in pride. . . . I wonder, too,
If she be fair, Lord Tristram's new-wed bride!—

(ISEULT *turns as her page comes in by the right hand door. He carries a chess-board and sets it down on the table in the foreground.*)

Were then thy dreams too painfully like this life,
Paranis, that thou hast outstripped the sun
And now, with eyes all red and swollen, star'st
So heavily?

PARANIS.

Your pardon, Queen Iseult,
I could not sleep. O lady, what a night!
I tremble still!

ISEULT. The night indeed was wild.

PARANIS.

Ay, like the sea the gale whips up. The wind
Swept all the covers from my bed and left
Me cold and trembling. Branches beat the wall

Above my head like demons of the storm.
The owls kept screaming from the dripping eaves
And whispering like lost souls in agony!
Hark! Hear him roar! O God, it is old Husdent!
Oh, listen to him roar. I never heard
A hound thus howl before!

ISEULT.

Peace, child. Each night,
He howleth so since Tristram went away.

PARANIS.

What? Every night and yet King Mark can sleep?

ISEULT.

King Mark can sleep as all good knights can sleep—
At any time and anywhere, while we,
Poor souls, must like blind beggars sue for sleep
As for an alms.
(*To* BRANGAENE). My mirror and my cloak.

PARANIS.

Pray tell me, Queen Iseult, why came we here
With good King Mark and left Tintagel's halls?
Why journeyed we to St. Lubine? The place
Is gloomy and a somber wood surrounds
The castle walls. Oh, 'tis an awful wood.
I am afraid, Iseult.

ISEULT.

Yea, boy, the wood
Is black and gloomy here. Give me some oil,
Brangaene, for my lips are parched and dried
From weeping all this never ending night.

PARANIS (*goes to the casement*).

Above Tintagel, lo, the sky was blue;
The sun shone on a foreign ship that came
Across the seas and lay at anchor there,
And made it look like gold. The ship came in
As we rode through the gate. I wish that I
Were at Tintagel once again and saw
That ship. For here black clouds obscure the sun
And smothering the ground they fly along
Like mighty ghosts. The earth smells damp and makes
Me shiver! Ugh!

ISEULT (*steps to the casement beside him and puts her arm about his neck.*)

But not to-day, for see,
The sun will shine and pour its golden rays
E'en o'er the Moroisland.
(*She leans out until her head is overflowed by the sunlight.*)
It's very hot!

PARANIS (*falling on his knees*).
O Queen Iseult, pray take the fairy dog
Into thine hands and it shall comfort thee—
That wond'rous brachet, Tristram's latest gift.
For, lo, since from Tintagel we have come
My heart is troubled by the wish to ask
Of thee a question, for Brangaene says
That when thou think'st of certain things thou weep'st.
I've seen thee weep, yet knew not why.

ISEULT.
Poor boy!
I lay awake the whole night through and yet
Not once did I take Peticriu to me.
So ask, my child. What wouldst thou know? Mine eyes
Are dry, for all my tears are spent and gone.
(*She has returned to the dressing table.*)

PARANIS.
Is this the wood where thou and Tristram dwelt
As people say, when ye had fled away?

ISEULT.
'Tis true; this wood once sheltered us.

PARANIS (*at the casement*).
This wood?
This fearful wood? 'Twas here that thou, Iseult
Of Ireland, Iseult the Goldenhaired
Took refuge with Sir Tristram like a beast
Hard pressed by dogs and men? There hang, perhaps,
Among the branches still some tattered shreds
Torn from thy robes; and from thy wounded feet
The blood still tints the roots and sharp-edged stones.
'Twas here thou sayest? In this wood?

ISEULT (*rising*).
Yea, child,
And this the castle is....
(BRANGAENE *takes the cloak from* ISEULT'S *shoulders and helps her put on a loose flowing garment.* ISEULT'S *hair is hidden under a close-fitting cap.*)

PARANIS (*steps nearer, in great surprise*).

Whither ye fled
From Mark's unjust decree? The castle makes
Me shudder, and the wood that hems it in.

BRANGAENE (*quoting the decree*).

"And if from this day on Sir Tristram dare
To show himself within my realm—he dies,
And with him dies Iseult of Ireland . . . ."

ISEULT (*quoting*).

"And witness here my name signed with my blood—"

(*She goes to the table on the right and sets up the chess-men.* PARANIS *sits on a cushion at her feet.* BRANGAENE *clears the dressing table.*)

PARANIS.

Is that the reason for thy bitter tears?

ISEULT.

Thy knowledge of my secret answers thee.

BRANGAENE.

Inquire not too much, Paranis, lest
A deeper knowledge of such things consume
Thy soul, and leave in place a cinder-pile.

PARANIS.

There's more men say, yet I believe them not.

ISEULT.

Indeed; what say these gossip-mongers?

PARANIS.

Why,
They say Sir Tristram, since he fled away
To save his life, and, ay, to save thine too,
Forgot thee, Queen Iseult, and thy great love,
And wed another in a foreign land.

ISEULT.

They call her Iseult of the Fair White Hands.

(*A pause.*)

PARANIS.

When I'm a Knight and wear my spurs of gold,
I'll love and serve thee with a truer love
Than Tristram did.

ISEULT.

How old art thou, my child?

PARANIS.

When I first came to serve thee as a page

Thirteen, I was; that was a year ago.
I'm fourteen now, but when I dream, I dream
That I am older and I love thee then
In knightly fashion, and my sword is dull'd
And scarred by blows that it has struck for thee.
My heart beats high when I behold thy face;
My cheek burns hot or freezes ashen pale.
And then, at other times, I dream that I
Have died for thee, only to wake and weep
That I am still a child!

ISEULT.

Listen to me,
Paranis. Once a wandering gleeman came
Two years agone and sang in Mark's high hall;
But, see! I said not it applied to us,
This song of his. An idle song it was
And nothing more. This lay told of a queen,
A certain queen whose page once loved her much,
With all the courtesy of Knighthood's laws;
Whose every glance was for his lady's face;
Whose cheeks alternately went hot and cold
When she was near. But when the King perceived
His changing color and his burning looks,
He slew the boy, and, tearing out his heart,
Now red, now pale, he roasted it, and served
It to his queen to eat saying it was
A teal his favorite hawk had slain.

PARANIS.

Tell me,
I pray, my lady, when a Knight has won
His spurs may he write songs?

ISEULT.

Ay, that he may.

PARANIS.

Since that is so, I'd rather sing than fight.
I'll go from court to court and sing in each
How Tristram was untrue to Queen Iseult!
I will avenge thy grievous wrongs in song
Instead of with the sword, and all who hear
My words shall weep as thou, my queen, hast wept.
I like the lay about the page's heart.
Is there no more?

ISEULT.

Remember it, my child;
Brangaene knows the melody thereof,
And she shall teach it thee.

PARANIS (*at the window*).

The King's awake.
I hear him calling to his hounds.

ISEULT.

Then go,
Paranis, go, and carry to King Mark
My morning and my wifely greeting; say
I rested well this night; that thou has left
Me overjoyed and happy that the morn
Is fair. Now haste thee, boy, for very soon
The Gaelic barons through the gates shall ride
Coming to pay their homage to King Mark.
Delay not, child, and if the King shall grant
Thee spurs, with mine own hands I'll choose thee out
The finest pair, and deep my name shall stand
Engraved in the gold. Go greet the King.

(PARANIS *kisses the hem of her robe and goes.*)

Tristram was faithful to my name, at least!
True to the name and false to me! Ten years!
Ten years I've mourned for him. With countless nights
Of endless agony have I repaid
Those other nights of endless happiness.
Through age-long days now beggared of their joy
I have atoned for all the smiles of yore.
Unkindly have ye dealt with me, sweet friend!
Disloyal Tristram! God shall punish thee,
Not I.

(BRANGAENE *kneels weeping beside her and buries her face in* ISEULT'S *robes.* ISEULT *raises her up.*)

And thou, dear one, sweet sister, come!
My sorrow's past enduring! Help me, help!
At Lubine here the very walls have tongues;
At Lubine here the sombre forest moans;
At Lubine here old Husdent whimpers day
And night unceasingly. 'Twas at Lubine
I parted from him last, my dearest friend,
And to his parting vows I answered thus:
"Take, friend, this golden ring with em'rald stone,

And if, in thy name, one shall bring it me,
No dungeon walls, no castle gates, no bolts
Shall keep me from thy side." And he: "I thank
Thee, dearest lady, and I swear that if,
At any time, in any place, one calls
On me in thy sweet name, I'll stand and wait
And answer in thy name by day or night."
And then—and then—he rode away!

BRANGAENE.

Iseult!
Iseult, my dearest; might I die, for I,
Wretch that I am, am surely most at fault,
Too ready for deceits and secret ways!

ISEULT.

Because I love a life, and better still
A death, great from its savage unrestraint,
Such as I found in mighty Tristram's love,
'Tis not thy fault. And formerly when thou
Gavest me thine own maiden smock to wear
Upon my bridal night with Mark, since mine
Was torn when I set foot on Cornish ground,
Thou didst fulfill what, as my guardian friend,
Thou hadst forseen in earlier days. Weep not
Because I weep. Sir Tristram's treachery
Is his, not ours. For this it is I weep.

BRANGAENE.

Thou shouldst not say he is not faithful still,
Dear sister. What know we of him or his?

ISEULT.

That he has married!

BRANGAENE.

Ay, her name's Iseult.

ISEULT.

My name! I shudder when I think thereon.
And, lo, his perjured tongue rots not, nor cleaves
Unto his teeth. To call her by my name
Should choke his faithless throat and strangle him.

BRANAGAENE.

Mark me, Iseult, I had not meant to speak,
But now I must; a servant of King Mark's
Spoke lately of that ship we saw sail in
And then cast anchor 'neath Tintagel's walls.

A merchant ship it is, he said, and hails
Direct from Arundland. Now send I pray,
And bid these merchants leave their ship and come
That they may tell what they have seen or heard
Of Tristram and his fate.

PARANIS (*runs in and jumps up onto the window-sill*).
O Queen, there ride
Three Gaelic earls! Dinas of Lidan first.

BRANGAENE (*hastening to his side*).
Then come, Iseult, and from the casement here
Behold the faithful Dinas, Tristram's friend!

PARANIS.
The one in coat of mail who rides behind,
Who is the man, Brangaene, canst thou see?

BRANGAENE.
O God! Denovalin, ill-omened bird
Of grim Tintagel.

ISEULT (*ignoring their remarks*).
Arund, didst thou say?
A merchant ship sailed in from Arundland?
That great gold sail, Brangaene, came across
The ocean to Tintagel? What? A ship,
And merchantmen from Arund? Speak, friend, speak!
Thou talk'st of Arund, and remain'st unmoved!
Brangaene, cruel, speak, and say the men
Are on their way to me, or are now here!
Torture me not!

BRANGAENE.
Nay, listen, sweet Iseult;
I said a servant of King Mark's spoke thus;
I know not whether it be true; to know
We must be back within Tintagel's walls.

ISEULT (*in rising agitation*).
Wait till we're back within Tintagel's walls?
Not see the merchants till we are gone back,
And linger thus for three whole days, say'st thou?
Nay, nay, Brangaene; nay! I will not wait.
'Twas not for this ten never-ending years
I sat upon Tintagel's tower and watched
With anxious eyes the many ships that sail
The green expanse from sky to sky. 'Twas not
For this that day by day Paranis went,

At my behest, down to the port, while I
Sat counting every minute one by one
Till he returned only to tell me tales
Of ships and lands indifferent as a fly's
Short life to me!—And now thou calmly say'st
A ship is here; a great gold sail lies moor'd
Hard by Tintagel's walls; a ship in which
Men live, and speak, and make reply when asked
Whence they are come: "From Arundland we sail."
Go quick, Brangaene; to Tintagel send
At once some swift and faithful messenger;
And bid him with all haste lead here to me
These merchants over night. I need both silks
And laces, samite and the snowy fur
Of ermines, and whatever else they have.
All that they have I'll buy! Let them but ride
With reckless speed!

BRANGAENE.

Ay, ride as peddlers do!
Yet will I send Gawain, since 'tis thy wish,
And with him yet another.

PARANIS.

Queen Iseult,
May I go with Gawain? I'll make them ride,
These merchantmen! I'll stick my dagger 'twixt
Their shoulder blades and prick them till from fear
They fairly fly to thee!

ISEULT.

Nay, rather, child,
Stay here with me; but help Brangaene find Gawain.

(BRANGAENE *and* PARANIS *open the door at the back of the stage to go out, but stand back on either side to permit* MARK *and the three Barons to enter.*)

BRANGAENE. The King!

(BRANGAENE AND PARANIS *go.*)

(MARK *and* THE BARONS *remain standing at some distance from* ISEULT. DENOVALIN *stands in the background and during this and the following scene remains almost motionless in the same spot.*)

MARK.

There stands Iseult, my queen,
All glorious as the summer day that shines
O'er all the world! Now welcome, mine Iseult!

Now welcome to Lubine! These gallant lords
Are come to greet thee—Dinas, Ganelun,
Denovalin. They have not seen thee now
These many months. And ye, my noble lords,
Is she not blonder than of yore?
(*He glances at a locket that hangs about his neck.*)
For see!
This lock of hair Sir Tristram brought me once.
Behold it now, how dark it seems next hers.

ISEULT.

I greet thee, Dinas, thou most loyal friend;
And thou, Lord Ganelun, I welcome thee
Most heartily, for many days have pass'd
Since last we met.

DINAS.

Ay, many days, Iseult.

ISEULT.

Hast thou forgot Tintagel's King and Queen?
'Twas not so once.

GANELUN.

I've been at Arthur's court
Nigh on two years, and there have taken part
In many deeds of high renown. 'Tis that
Has kept me from Tintagel and from home.

DINAS.

And I, fair Queen Iseult, am growing old;
I've left the saddle for the pillow's ease.
(*pointedly.*)
I see the chess-board stands prepared, and so,
If Mark permits, 'tis I who in his place
Will lead the black against thy crimson pawns,
As we were wont to do in times gone by.
I love the game, but lack with whom to play.

MARK.

Ay, Dinas, good it is to have some friend
Who loves us near us in our twilight years;
Play thou with Goldenhaired Iseult to-day.
Perchance it may distract her, for too oft
She seemeth sad, and mourns as women do
Who have no children. God forgive us both!
But come, my lords, first let us drink a pledge
Of greeting, and permit this man to make

His peace with my fair queen. I hate long feuds.
Come, friends; come, let us drink, and all this day
We'll spend together in good fellowship.

(*He leaves the room with* DINAS *and* GANELUN *by the door on the right.* ISEULT *and* DENOVALIN *stand opposite each other, some distance apart, silent and motionless.*)

DENOVALIN (*calmly and insinuatingly*).

Am I a vulture, Queen Iseult, that thou
Should'st cower silently at mine approach?

ISEULT (*angrily*).

My Lord Denovalin, how darest thou
Show thyself brazenly before my face?

DENOVALIN.

A bitter greeting and harsh words, Iseult.

ISEULT.

And I shall beg the King that he forbid
Thee to approach the walls within a mile
With visor raised.

DENOVALIN.

An empty threat. King Mark
Is not mine over-lord, nor I his liege.

ISEULT.

And I tell thee, my Lord Denovalin,
Thy face is more abhorrant than the plague;
More hateful than dread leprosy! Away!

DENOVALIN.

More measured should'st thou be in thy reproof. (*Much moved*) It was for thee I came today, harsh Queen!

ISEULT (*passionately*).

When last thou stoodst before my face, my Lord,
Naked I was, and men at arms prepar'd
The glowing pyre whereon thy jealousy
Had doomed my shrinking body to be burned!
Calm wast thou then; no quiver moved thy face,
Untroubled by thy deed. Dost thou forget?

DENOVALIN.

And Tristram stood beside thee too, as he
Had stood when I accused thee to King Mark.
And when I see him standing next to thee,
Mine eyes grow dim and all the world seems red
With blood. 'Twas him I saw, not thee, Iseult,
Else had I died of sorrow and of shame.

ISEULT.

What *Thou? Thou* grieve? *Thou* die of shame?
The stones
Shall soften and shall melt ere thou, my lord,
Has learned what pity means!

DENOVALIN.

Condemn me not,
Fair Queen, but let me speak. The day thy foot
First touched the Cornish strand as from thy ship
Thou camest to the shore, the affianced bride
Of stout King Mark, thy beauty dazzled me.
An oath of loyalty to thee I swore
Upon thy golden head and by my God;
My life I pledged thee. Thou wast wondrous fair!

ISEULT.

And I, my lord, what evil did I thee?

DENOVALIN.

Thy love for Tristram.

ISEULT.

What? Denovalin,
When, by a miracle of God, I have
Escaped the fiery death which thou prepared'st;
When with these tender hands of mine I bore
Before my judges, and without a burn
The glowing iron, and with sacred oath
Have sworn, thou darest doubt Almighty God's
Decree; darest accuse me still, and say
I love Sir Tristram with a guilty love?
This nephew of my wedded spouse! Of this
I'll make complaint unto my sponsors, Sir!

DENOVALIN (*calmly*).

Almighty God thou hast perhaps deceived;
But we, at least, Iseult, we must be frank,
Though enemies, must deal straight forwardly
With one another.

ISEULT.

Go, thou were-wolf!—go!

DENOVALIN.

There was a time when I, too, heard the song
Of birds in spring-time; but the fragrant breath
Thy golden hair exhales,—that hair which I
Have seen flow rippling through Sir Tristram's hands—

Has made me hard and rough—a very beast!
I live pent in my castle like a wolf
All day I sleep then ride abroad at night—
Ride furiously until my horse comes home
With gasping nostril and with bloody flank,
And lies as dead when morning comes! My hounds
Fall dead along the road! And yet, may be,
That long before the earliest cock has crowed
I cry aloud upon thy name each day
Like one who swelters in his own life's blood!
Remember this, for hadst thou once, Iseult,
Beside me ridden ere the night grew dark,
Perchance this hatred of all living things
Had never gat such hold upon my soul.
Remember this, throughout the many things
Which shall, ere evening's darkness come to pass.
And evening comes to thee, Iseult,—to me,
To all! And so 'tis best thou understand
The secret of the past fairly to judge.
This is the peace I fain would have with thee.

ISEULT.

I am afraid—afraid—of thee!

DENOVALIN.

Iseult,
Why should'st thou fear my words so innocent
Of threat—or sense.
(*changing the subject*).
At dawn to-day I rode
Along the Morois.

ISEULT.

Ay, since that way runs
The road from thine abode to St. Lubine.

DENOVALIN.

'Tis so; and yet I met a quarry there—
A quarry wond'rous strange! Shall I, Iseult,
Go bring its skin to thee?

ISEULT (*in great anxiety*).

I wish no fur,
Or pelts slain by thine hand, Denovalin—

DENOVALIN.

That I believe; yet might it please King Mark.
(*breaks out passionately*).

It might well be that once again thou felt'st
The burning touch of death, all hot and red.
And if no safe retreat there were for thee
In Cornwall, save within my castle walls,
And not a man in Cornwall stood to shield
Thy golden tresses from the hangman's hand,
Except myself! If such the case, what wouldst
Thou do if I said "come"?

ISEULT (*wild with terror and despair*).

If such the case,
O God of Bethlehem! If such the case
I'd fling mine arms about the neck of Death,
And, clinging close to him, I'd spit at thee,
Denovalin! Those wrinkles, cold and hard,
About thy mouth on either side disgust
My soul, Denovalin! I loath thee! Go!

DENOVALIN.

I go, Iseult, for thou hast made thy choice.
Forget it not. Forget not, too, the pact
Of peace my soul has made with thine. Farewell!
I'll go and bid Sir Dinas come to play
At chess with thee. Play quickly, Queen Iseult,
Thy time is short, and short may be thy game!
(*He goes.*)

ISEULT.

O God, how bitter are his words! They cut
Like sharpen'd swords and burn like hissing flames!
What is his will? His speech, though witless, ay,
And void of sense, insults and threatens me,—
It warns me too—of what—O God, I'm cold!
If but Brangaene came, or Dinas came!
It grips my soul!—More Gaelic barons come—!
How often have I stood concealed here
And seen him come proud riding through the gate!
My friend that comes no more! How grand he was!
His lofty stature did o'ertop them all!
How nobly trod his steed!—Dear Tristram, friend,
Does thy new Iseult's heart beat quick as mine
At but the echo of thy step?
(*Kneels down in front of the little shrine.*)
And thou,
O little brachet, thinks thy lord of me,

As I of him?—"For they who drink thereof
Together so shall love with every sense
Alive, yet senseless—with their every thought,
Yet thoughtless too, in life, in death, for aye—
Yet he, who having known the matchless bliss
Of that intoxicating cup of love,
Spits out the draught disloyally, shall be
A homeless and a friendless worm—a weed
That grows beside the road." Oh, Tristram, sweet!

(DINAS *enters.* ISEULT *rushes toward him.*)

Dinas of Lidan! Dearest friend, most true!
With what has this man threatened me? Of what
Then, warned?—Friend, speak, for round me whirls the world
My brain is powerless to think or judge.

DINAS.

Denovalin has bid me come to thee
To play at chess. He said thou wast in haste.
And has he, as Mark ordered, made his peace
With thee?

ISEULT.

Denovalin make peace with me!
I've told thee, Dinas, that with sombre words
He has stirred up the past and threatened me.
He spoke forebodingly of coming days.
I fear his hint of swift approaching harm!

DINAS.

Thou say'st Denovalin has threatened thee!
That bodes no good!

ISEULT.

What thinkst thou, Dinas? Speak!

DINAS.

It makes me fear that I was not deceived
This morn as through the early mist I rode.

ISEULT.

O Dinas!

DINAS.

For I saw a man who rode
As secretly, and stole along the way
Concealed in the murky mists of dawn.
I—

ISEULT.

Dinas!

DINAS.

Tristram's in the land, Iseult!

ISEULT.

O Dinas, speak! (*softly*)
My friend, Sir Tristram came
At dawn to-day? The man who loved me so!
(*recovering herself*)
O Dinas, Dinas, didst thou speak to him?

DINAS (*sternly*).

Twice did I call on him to stand. He fled.

ISEULT.

Thou should'st have called upon him in my name;
He would have stood thee answer then, for thus
He swore to me to do, by day or night,
At any place . . .

DINAS.

I called him in thy name,
And yet he fled away.

ISEULT.

He fled from thee?
(*angrily*)
It was not Tristram then! How dar'st thou speak
Such slander 'gainst my friend!

DINAS.

I swore that I
Would be thy friend, and for thy sake, Iseult,
His friend. But now I say Sir Tristram broke
The oath he swore to thee, and on this day
Hath wronged thee grievously, Iseult.

ISEULT (*heavily and brokenly*).

The spouse
Of Iseult of the Fair White Hands appeared
To thee, say'st thou, and broke his parting oath,
The last he swore to Iseult Goldenhaired?

PARANIS (*enters in ill-suppressed excitement*).

Lord Dinas, from King Mark I come. He bids
Thee haste to him straightway with all despatch,
For in the name of justice calls he thee.

ISEULT.

O Dinas, Dinas, Tristram broke his oath—!

DINAS.

Alas, Iseult, now must we strive to ward

The consequences of King Mark's decree
And its fulfilment from thine head?

ISEULT (*angrily*).

How can
An alien woman's spouse affect my life?

DINAS.

I go to stem with all the strength I have
This threat of thine undoing. Fare thee well.
(*As* DINAS *goes out, two armed guards step into the room and stand on either side of the door.*)

ISEULT.

And fare thee well, thou truest of the true!
(*to the guards*). And ye, what would ye here?

GUARD.

King Mark has bid
Us guard thy door; thou mayest not go forth
Until he summoneth thee.

PARANIS (*falls on his knees*).

Gawain lies bound;
Brangaene's cast into a prison cell,
Strange things, dread things press on each others' heels
Within these walls; and what they may portend
I cannot tell!

ISEULT.

Paranis, child, be still.

CURTAIN

ACT II

THE HIGH HALL OF ST. LUBINE CASTLE

SCENE: *Bay windows. On the right, in the background is a wide double-door. On the left, in the back-ground, and diagonally to it stands a long table surrounded by high-backed chairs. The chairs at either end of the table are higher than the others and are decorated with the royal arms. Against the wall on the left stands a throne.*

Five Gaelic barons stand, or sit about the table. LORD GANELUN *enters.*

A BARON.

And canst thou tell us now, Sir Ganelun,
What's taking place that we are summoned here
In council while our legs are scarcely dry
From our long ride?

SECOND BARON.
A welcome such as this
Likes me not, Sirs!
GANELUN.
I know no more than ye,
My Lords, who are but lately come.
THIRD BARON.
And Mark?
Where bides the King?
SECOND BARON.
Instead of greeting us,
He sends a low born knave, and bids us wait
With unquenched thirst in empty halls.
FIRST BARON (*standing up*).
By God,
I feel a wish to mount my horse and ride
For home!
FIFTH BARON (*entering*).
Do ye, good friends, know why King Mark
Lets Tristram's savage hound, old Husdent, live?
It needed but a little that it caused
My death!
FOURTH BARON.
Just now?
FIFTH BARON.
As I rode by its cage
It leap'd against the bars, and made them shake
With such a noise that my affrighted horse
Uprear'd, and headlong sprang across the court.
GANELUN.
The hound is wolflike; none within his cage
Dares go. Three keepers hath he torn to death.
FIFTH BARON.
A wild and dang'rous beast! I would not keep
The brute within my castle walls.
THIRD BARON (*walks irritatedly to the window*).
Good Sirs,
It irks me much ungreeted thus to wait!
FIRST BARON.
Such welcome have I never yet received,
And new the custom is!

GANELUN.

Have patience, sirs,
It seems King Mark and Lord Denovalin
Discuss in secret weighty things—

THIRD BARON.

And wish
To teach us how to wait!

GANELUN.

Nay, here's King Mark!

(MARK *and* DENOVALIN *enter; behind them comes a man-at-arms who closes the door and stands against the wall beside it.* MARK *holds a parchment in his hand, and, without noticing the* BARONS, *walks agitatedly to the front of the stage.* DENOVALIN *goes behind the table and places himself between it and the throne. The* BARONS *rise.*)

FIRST BARON.

Does Mark no longer know us that he greets
Us not?

SECOND BARON.

And dost thou know, King Mark.....?

MARK (*turning angrily upon the* BARONS).

Am I
A weak old man because my hair is gray,
Because my hands are wrinkled, ay, and hard,
Because at times my armor chafes my back
Am I an old and sapless log? A man
Used up who shall forever keep his peace?
(*controlling himself*) I crave your pardon, Sirs, pray take your seats.

DINAS.

Thou badst me come to thee.

MARK.

Yes, Dinas, yes,
So take thy place.
(*He controls his emotion with great difficulty and speaks heavily.*)
And ye, my friends, give ear.
A solemn reckoning I must make with you.
You stood as sponsors; hence your sanctioning word
I need for what I am about to do.
For yonder man has with an evil lance
Attacked me and he has so lifted me
Out of my saddle that my head doth swim,

And trembles from the shock; wherefore, I pray,
Forgive the churlish greeting ye received.
'Twas grief and accident, not scorn. I bid
You welcome, one and all, most heartily.

THIRD BARON.

We greet thee, Mark.

GANELUN.

But tell us now what thing
So overclouds thy mind; thy welfare dwells
Close intertwined with ours.

DENOVALIN (*unfolding the parchment*).

And now, my Lords,
Are any of the witnesses not here
Who signed the contract and decree which Mark
Drew up with Tristram and with Queen Iseult?

FIRST BARON.

'Tis then of this decree that thou wouldst speak?

THIRD BARON.

I signed.

FOURTH BARON.

And I.

FIFTH BARON.

And I.

MARK.

Three witnesses
There were, and ye are three. 'Tis good, my Lords,
That we are all assembled here.
(*He speaks brokenly and with all the marks of mental suffering and suppressed emotion.*)
Ye know
How long I lived alone within these walls
With my good nephew Tristram and not once
Did any woman cross my threshold o'er.

FIFTH BARON.

And 'twas through us that things were changed; we cried
Upon thee for a son and heir.

SECOND BARON.

Iseult
Then came from Ireland to be thy Queen.

DENOVALIN (*coldly, firmly, and in a loud voice*).

Nobly escorted, in Sir Tristram's care!

MARK (*softly*).

I loved Iseult, and much it pleased me then
To call this sweet and noble lady mine,
And so to honor her. But see, it was
But for a single day, then came this man
(*pointing to* DENOVALIN.)
And spake to me and said: "Thy wife Iseult
And Tristram whisper in the dark!" And since
The speaking of that evil word, this world
Has turned to hell, and through my veins my blood
Has run like seething fire for her sake,
Who was my wife, and cried for her as though
She were not mine!

THIRD BARON.

But thou didst not believe
These evil words?

MARK.

No, never in my life
Did I fight off a foeman from myself
More fiercely than these words.

DENOVALIN (*sternly*).

But soon this man
Came back and said: "The hands of Queen Iseult
And Tristram's hands are locked when it is dark."

MARK.

And then I slunk behind them like a thief;
I spied upon their lips, their hands, their eyes!
I dogged their footsteps like a murderer;
I stood beneath their casements in the night
To catch their dreaming words until I scorned
And loathed myself for my distrusting mind.
Nothing! Nothing I found; and yet Iseult
From that time on was dearer than my God
And His Salvation!

GANELUN.

Honor and esteem
The queen had from thee ever.

MARK.

Ay, she did,
Friend Ganelun. But soon that man there came,
And whispered in mine ear: "Art thou stone blind?
Thy nephew Tristram and thy wife Iseult

Sleep in each other's arms by day and night!"
O, God! O, God! My Lords, I set to work—
And thought I'd caught them in their guilt!—Poor fool!
(*He hides his face.*)

DINAS.

'Tis so; and thou badst build a mighty pyre
Of seasoned wood and well dried peat. But God
In anger blew the fire out. They fled,
The twain together, to the Morois land.

MARK.

And then one night I stole upon them there.
(Sir Dinas knew of this alone, my Lords.)
Iseult was sleeping, and Sir Tristram slept
An arm's length scarce before me in the moss,
All pale and wan, and breathed so heavily,
So wearily, like some hard hunted beasts.
(*groaning.*)
How easy was it then! See what befell!
Between their bodies lay a sword, by God!
A naked sword and sharp!—'Twas Morholt's sword!
—Then silently I took it, and I left
Mine own instead, and, like a fool, I wept
At their great purity.

SECOND BARON.

Was Tristram moved
By this exchange of swords to give thee back
Thy wife Iseult?

MARK (*violently*).

And, God! I took her! See,
His cunning counsel circumvented next
The red hot steel and made her innocence
Seem more apparent, and her hands shone white,
Unburned, and all unscarred like ivory
After the test! My nephew Tristram fled,
Exiled, and the decree that ye all know
Was sealed. So harken now, ye witnesses
Of the decree. If Tristram were to break
The bond and secretly, and in disguise
Return to Cornwall—

THIRD BARON.

God forbid!

MARK.

Yet if
Sir Tristram should do this and break the bond
And thus endanger both his life and hers.....

FIFTH BARON.

If such the case, they lied to thee, King Mark;
And worse, they lied to God.

MARK.

They lied! They lied!
Ay, man, they lied to me and unto God!
And now I need no longer feel my way,
Nor tap about me in the dark, nor bump
My soul against my blindness! Ay, they lied!
My bed was foul; my life a jest for knaves,
For they had lied. And now, behold, that man
There comes,—Denovalin, I hate thee!—comes
And says Sir Tristram broke the bond—
(*The Barons spring up.*)

FIRST BARON.

How so?

SECOND BARON.

What knows he?

THIRD BARON.

Speak Denovalin!

GANELUN.

Thou say'st
Sir Tristram broke the bond that holds his life?

FIFTH BARON.

I'll not believe it!

FOURTH BARON.

Tristram wed, ye know,
The daughter of King Kark of Arundland.

THIRD BARON.

Denovalin must bring us proofs!

MARK.

Gently,
My Lords! Before the high court shall he speak.
Go, summon hither Queen Iseult.
(*The Man-At-Arms goes.*)

DINAS.

Good Mark,
Why dost thou hasten to believe this tale?

Remember, 'tis Denovalin who speaks.

MARK.

'Tis not a matter of belief, my friend,
I wish to know if for her sake he came;
To see her once again—no more. The rest
I know, and I know, too, the end of this—
This game that's played about my life, my blood,
Mine honor!

(*The guard announces the Queen who enters the hall followed by* PARANIS. *She remains in the background. The Barons rise as she appears.*)

GUARDS.

Place! Stand back for Queen Iseult.

ISEULT (*quietly and gently*).

Ye called me, sirs; now speak, for I am here.

MARK (*he takes an angry step toward her, checks himself, and stares at her a moment. He speaks slowly and without moving, and addresses himself to Dinas only.*)

Bid thou Iseult of Ireland draw near!

(ISEULT, *without waiting for Dinas to speak, steps to the middle of the hall.* MARK *does not move and speaks louder.*)

Bid thou Iseult of Ireland draw near,
And sit there by the board—there at the head,
And facing me.

ISEULT.

And may I ask thee now
What this extraordinary custom is,
That twice thou dost repeat it, Mark? In mine
Own land of Ireland I never saw
A man thus treat his wife. So, if it suits
Thy will,—I'll stand!
(*Neither* MARK *nor the Barons move. Anxiously.*)
Will no one speak to me?

MARK.

My Lords, sit down.

(*He walks in front of the table.* PARANIS *kneels beside* ISEULT *who lays her hand upon his head as on the head of a dog.*)

ISEULT.

With stern command, devoid
Of courtesy, O Mark, thou bad'st me come;
I've come, for 'tis my heart's wish to obey,
Since thou art good to me and kind. Thou know'st

This hall, these men that stand about, awake
Full many a painful memory in mine heart,
And so I crave a swift reply. What will
Ye of me here?

MARK (*roughly*).

Why was Gawain sent forth
In secret to Tintagel from Lubine?

ISEULT.

He went not secretly, but openly,
Good Mark, and that because some merchantmen
Came to Tintagel from across the seas
With merchandise, I wished to bid them come
To me that I might choose me from their stock
The wares that pleased me and the things I need.

MARK (*scornfully*).

The purchase must be made at once, I trow!
Since here, more than elsewhere, thou need'st such things.
'Tis true that fifteen pack beasts stayed behind;
They were all laden with thy things alone,
And stood unnoticed by the road, Iseult,
Beside a well. I recollect!

ISEULT.

Nay, Sire.
Yet St. Lubine brings me sad memories
And heavy hours. Therefore, I thought to gain
Some slight diversion and amusement, too,
To sooth my woe. Thou know'st the joy I have
Of mingled masses of bright colored things,—
Things strange and rare!
(*anxiously*)

Soft rustling silks; the gold
Embroidery of robes; the jewel's flash;—
Furs, chains and golden girdles, needles, clasps!
To see, and in mine hands to hold such things
Delighteth me!—A childish whim, perhaps,
But thou thyself this joy hast oft procured
By sending merchants to me in my bower.
What wonder is it then that I should think
To do the same?

MARK.

Tis so; I wronged thy thoughts,
For I myself have often brought such men

To thee. These peddlers and these mountebanks
Are famous friends! I see it now! They come
From far and wide; they travel much; they are
Both wise and cunning—apt, indeed, to serve
As messengers!

ISEULT.

Ay, Mark, thou didst me wrong,
But greater to Brangaene and Gawain.
I pray thee set them free; they but obeyed
My will.

MARK (*angrily*).

Bring forth the pair, and set them free—
This go-between Brangaene and Gawain!
(*The soldier goes.*)
Tell now, my Lord Denovalin, thy tale,
And speak thy words distinctly, ay, and loud!
And ye, my Lords, I pray you, listen well;
A pretty tale!
(MARK *crouches on the steps of the throne, and stares at* ISEULT. DENOVALIN *steps forward from behind the table.*)

DENOVALIN.

I rode to-day at dawn,
And coming through the Morois saw while mist
Still hung about the trees, around a curve
Before me in the way a man who rode.
Nobly he rode and proudly sat his steed,
Yet seemed to wish that none should see him there,
Avoiding carefully the clearer spots,
Halting and listening and looking round.
Then, when he heard the hoof-beats of my horse,
He turned into a thicket where the trees
Concealed him from my sight. I followed close,
And soon I was as near as a man's voice
Will carry. Loudly did I call on him
But when he heard he drove the spurs so deep
Into his steed that, like a wounded stag,
It sprang into the air and dashed away.
I followed close behind, and bade the man
In knightly and in manly honor stand.
He heeded not my words and fled away.
And then I cried aloud that he should stand,
And called him by Iseult the Goldenhaired.

ISEULT (*passionately and firmly*).
And at my name Sir Tristram stood?
(*anxiously*)
Did he
Not stand and wait?
(*imploringly*)
O, say that at that call
Sir Tristram stood!
(*passionately*)
And I will bless thy lips.
MARK (*cries out in a muffled voice*). Iseult!
ISEULT.
I'll kiss thine hand, my Lord, and I—
DENOVALIN.
Who says, proud Queen Iseult, the man I saw
Was Tristram, noble Lord of Lyonesse?
ISEULT (*her voice becomes proud and cold*).
My Lord Denovalin, I'll kiss thy hands
If thou wilt say my husband's nephew stood
And bided thee, for it would vex my heart
If such a knight should flee from such as thou!
'Twould shame me sorely, for I tell thee now,
My Lord Denovalin, I scorn and hate
Thee as a cur!
DENOVALIN (*suppressing his emotion*).
If Tristram stood or fled,
I do not say.
ISEULT.
That vexes me indeed,
For now, my noble Lords, I turn to you
With deeper and more serious complaints
Against Sir Tristram that he hath defied
Mark's word, thus forcing me to share a guilt
Of which my soul is wholly innocent!
MARK (*crouches on the steps of the throne groaning*).
How well her Irish tongue can twist her words
To suit her purposes! Her words are smooth;
So smooth that when one grasps them they escape
The hand like shining, slippery, squirming snakes!
And she has subtle words, caressing words,
That burn, and haughty ones that swell and puff
Like stallions' nostrils, and toss high their heads!

O, she has words, and words, and many words
With which to frame her lies!
(*He takes a step toward* ISEULT. *Angrily.*)
And see her eyes!
Those wondrous eyes! Eyes for deceit and fraud!
She has deceived me with those eyes and lips
Since first she set her foot on Cornish soil!

ISEULT (*trembling with shame and anger*).
Thy words are like the shame of women, Mark!
Like filthy hands! Irish I am, but there,
In word and deed, polite restraint prevails,
And courteous measuredness; there fiery wrath
Becomes in no wise master of the man!
I was not taught in youth to guard myself
From drunkenness of wrath!

MARK.
Ye hear her speak!
That was a sample of her haughty words!
Iseult the Goldenhaired of Ireland,
Didst thou with thine own hand and blood sign this?
(MARK *holds out a parchment.*)

ISEULT.
Ay, Mark, there stands my name writ with my blood.
(*with closed eyes quoting*)
"And if from this day on Lord Tristram dare
To show himself within my realm, he dies;
And with him dies Iseult of Ireland."—
I signed my name and wrote it with my blood.

MARK.
Denovalin has pledged his head and soul
That he has seen Tristram of Lyonesse
This day within the confines of my realm,
And so if none stand forth to say he lies,
Iseult shall die.

DINAS (*stands up*). I say Denovalin has lied!

MARK. Dinas of Lidan! Thou!

GANELUN. Well said, Good Dinas!

DINAS.
I, too, met a man to-day
At early dawn whom I first held to be
Sir Tristram, noble nephew of King Mark.
Since from the east I travelled and yet thou,

Denovalin, cam'st through the Moroisland
Riding from westward, and since St. Lubine
Stood as a central point between us both,
Sir Tristram must have been a double man
That in the east and in the west he crossed
My path, and at the self-same hour, thine own.
My Lord Denovalin, this cannot be;
One of the two was not Sir Tristram's self;
And one of us who saw was therefore wrong;
If one of us has erred, then why not both?

MARK.

Dinas, had I not known thee from thy youth
I'd think thee leagued in guilt with Queen Iseult!
Hath she ensnared thee, too, with perjured oaths,
With feigned tears of outraged innocence,
With smiles that fuddle and beguile thy mind?
Hath she bewitched thy judgment that thou seek'st
So eagerly to die for her; to smirch
Thine honorable word to save her life?
Thine hair is gray like mine. Thou ravest, friend!
Denovalin has pledged his solemn word
That he has seen Sir Tristram. Ponder well
Ere thou pick up his gauntlet.

SECOND BARON.

Dinas may
Be right.

THIRD BARON.

Ay, that he may.

FIFTH BARON.

There cannot be
Two Tristrams in the Morois wood.

DENOVALIN (*springing up*).

My Lords,
I've pledged my word! Take heed unto your tongues!

GANELUN.

Methinks 'tis only just that Queen Iseult
Should not be put to death till, quick or dead,
The true Sir Tristram be discovered.

SECOND BARON.

Well said, Lord Ganelun!

THIRD BARON.

So think we all.

ISEULT.

By God! my lords, it is enough! Ye sit
Discussing here in calm indifference
If I shall live or die, as though I were
An animal! My race is nobly sprung;
I will that ye bow down before my blood,
Since ye do not bow down to womanhood!
I will that ye permit me to return
To mine apartments and that ye do not
Here keep me standing like a haltered beast!
When ye decide, King Mark shall send me word.
And now I wish to go.

MARK (*in swelling anger*).

Ye hear her words!
Words, words! Yet words that make one wish to kneel
And humbly beg for pardon at her feet;
To kiss her very shoes when she can find
Such haughty thoughts and words! Behold her there!
Is she not fuller than this whole wide world
Of smiles and tears and lies? And when she smiled
With those red lips—far sweeter than strong wine,—
A smile so silvery bright that God's whole world
Caroled for very joy in God's own hand,—
'Twas not on me she smiled. Her cuckold fool!
When on her lowered lids there trembled tears,
Like drops of dew upon a flower's brim,
'Twas not for me she wept. Her cuckold fool!
Through all the dark sweet hours of the night
As in mine arms she lay, a phantom hung
Above our heads; between our bodies lay
A ghost dividing us; 'twas for this ghost,
The phantom image of Sir Tristram's self,
She wept and smiled, true to her perjured soul;
Though all the while her soulless body lay
With simulated passion in mine arms,
Deceiving me. Her smiles, her tears, were his;
Her kisses were for him!
And now ye say
She shall not die till Tristram can be found!
Bethink ye of the minutes that ye grant
That mouth to smile; the minutes that ye grant
Those eyes to weep! Whom will they not deceive,—

Her smiles, her eyes, her words? Both you and me,
And God. But I will change her smiles to tears!
I'll change her weeping to the bitter laugh
Of hideousness, that we at last may rest,
And be secure from all her woman's wiles!
And since she shall not die, I will bestow
Her as a gift! This surely is my right.
To-day at noon, when in the sun her hair
Shall shine the brightest in the golden light,
Unto the leprous beggars of Lubine
I'll give her as a gift!

(*A very long-drawn, low cry, like that of a dying animal, comes from* ISEULT, *who, except for a slight stagger from which she immediately recovers, remains like a frozen statue. For a moment there is absolute silence.*)

DINAS.

Mark, art thou mad?

GANELUN.

Thou dost a thing, in sorrow and in wrath,
A thing so foul one fears to think thereon!

FIRST BARON.

Bethink thee, Mark!

SECOND BARON.

Art thou gone wholly fey?

FOURTH BARON.

A most unknightly thing! Recall thy words.

MARK (*He crouches on the steps of the throne with his back to the Barons. He speaks slowly in a dull, even voice which rises until it ends in an almost insane screech.*)

Twice hath God mocked me, made my certitude
Appear the whimsy of a jealous man.
Twice hath God laughed at me until all men
Tapped on their foreheads, sneered, or pitied me.
I trusted God's omniscience; let him judge
If I or she spoke truth. God is a fool!
She smiled; she wept; she spoke; and God believed!
I'll trust no more in burning pyres, in steel
Heated until it glows. She smiles at God,
And God puts out the flames and cools the steel!
I know a surer test,—a flame so hot
That God himself can not control its heat.
I want that woman burned, scorched, seared, destroyed!

I want her guilt and not her innocence!
I trust not God; but lepers I will trust!
Think ye those outcasts, woman-hungry, mad,
Will hold their fiery lust—men who have known
No woman's body to caress in months,
In years? Them she will not put off with smiles!
You are my friends, you lepers mad with lust;
You are fair judges, and your verdict true!
And what is left when you have done with her—
Iseult of Ireland, the Goldenhaired;
Iseult the Fair, a harlot, perjured, false—
The dogs may have, if they can stomach it!
(*After a moment of silence* MARK *collects himself. He speaks in a cold, hard voice, and very clearly.*)
At mid-day shall the lepers of Lubine
Collect, and wait within the court.

DINAS.

Farewell,
King Mark, I'll stay with thee no more!

GANELUN.

I go
With thee.

FIRST BARON.

And I.

SECOND BARON.

We leave thee one and all!

MARK (*turns his head, almost smiling*).

Will no one stay with me?

DENOVALIN (*stepping forward*).

I will, King Mark.

MARK (*springing up*).

O, drive this man outside the walls, and bid
Him ride with speed! I feel a great desire
To tear his body into bloody strips,
For this black deed which he hath done today.
And if again the Lord shall testify
'Gainst thee, Denovalin, then shalt thou die!
I swear it! Thou shalt die!

DENOVALIN (*calmly*).

My castle walls
Are high and strong, O, Mark!

ISEULT.

What loathsome brutes,
What wretched beasts lust makes of men! Behold
Thyself, O, Mark, thou who art wise and kind,
How utterly thou art consumed by lust.
See, in thy madness thou wouldst take my life,
First shaming me in ways unnamable.
That which thou lovest most thou castest forth
A prey to human vultures, and thou think'st
Thou hatest me! O, Mark, how blind thou art
That thou mistakest love for bitter hate!
I pity thee. But I shall not beseech,
Nor wring mine hands, nor beg for leniency.
I do not know how women nobly born
Can live on through the loathsome leper test,
And will not think thereon, for 'tis enough
To make a woman die; yet, once again,
Before you and before my God I swear
And will repeat my solemn oath, and then,
When I have sworn it, He will send His help,
Or let my flesh be torn between the dogs
And leprous human vultures of Lubine.
(*She pauses and then speaks very clearly*)
I swear that I have never thrilled with love
But for that man who clasped me in his arms,
A maiden still, as clean and pure as snow
New-fallen on a still, mid-winter's morn.
That man, and that man only, have I loved
With all the passion of my womanhood.
To him I gave myself with my whole soul;
My heart was full of dancing and of song;
My love was wreathed in smiles as some May-morn
Laughs softly on the mountain tops. That man
I loved; that man who first within his arms
Took me when I first reached this Cornish land!
None other have I loved. God hear mine oath!

MARK (*almost screaming*).

O, shield me, he that loves me, from her oaths!

DENOVALIN (*calmly*).

To her own chambers let Iseult be led.

CURTAIN

ACT III

The Court in Front of the Chapel of the Castle of St. Lubine

Scene:* *Most of the back of the stage is taken up by the facade of a not very large stone church; it is built close against a cliff; its court-yard forms a sort of terrace, and above, center and right, higher on the cliff, one sees the lower part of the walls of the castle. A broad flight of steps leads up to the church doors which are closed. On each side of these steps, and running under them, other steps lead down into the crypt. On the right, and going slightly downward into the face of the cliff, there are three small, low entrances, without doors, like the entrances to caves. Bushes partly cover the side of the hill. Over each entrance waves a tattered flag of variegated bright colored materials. At the rear, to the left of the church, and adjoining it, there is a high closed double gate which leads to the road that runs to the town and the castle. On the left side of the gate, which forms part of a wall, is a sort of platform, on which a sentinel can stand. From there, to the right and toward the front, the wall slopes quickly downward until, at the middle of the left it is only three feet high, and so continues to the front. One feels that beyond the wall the cliff drops sharply, giving a sensation of great height. The first part of the act takes place in complete silence.*

After the curtain rises, the stage remains empty for an appreciable length of time. Slowly, from the steps leading to the crypt to the right of the main steps, appears a leper. He is tall and dressed in the clothes which at the period all lepers were obliged by law to wear, a long, loose cloaklike garment of bright color; a hood of a different color almost entirely hides the face. The man is holding part of his cloak across his face, only his eyes can be seen. In the same hand he holds the clappers which as they went all lepers were obliged to shake to warn people of their approach. In his other hand, he holds a long, stout staff. He gives the general appearance of being ragged, dirty, an outcast, half man, half animal. Furtively and slowly he crosses the stage, looks over the low wall, examines the gate and returns toward the crypt. As he reaches the steps there is a sound of clappers—a sort of rattle—and two lepers emerge from the center entrance on the right. He rattles his clapper slightly and disappears down the steps. The two new lepers bring out bright

*These stage directions and all those throughout the act should be carefully read, as on a clear picture of the scene in the readers' mind, much of the power of this act depends. (*Translator*)

colored rags which they shake out and with which they decorate the entrance, stepping back to examine their work. A third one drags out some filthy bedding, which he shakes and then drags back into the hole. The first two go back and bring out green branches and a poorly made garland of leaves and flowers; with these they erect a sort of arch over the entrance. As they work, they look furtively about and occasionally shake their clappers. They seem very excited and, from time to time, take hold of each other, dance a jig and make suggestive gestures.

There is the sound of the gate being unbolted, and the lepers with a louder rattle dive back into their hovels.

After a moment the gate swings silently open and ISEULT *enters, followed by* BRANGAENE *and* PARANIS. *The two latter walk with lowered heads in obvious sadness.* ISEULT *walks very straight almost as in her sleep, her head is high and she looks straight before her. She wears a long silk gown, but one can see that below it she has on only a white linen smock. Her golden hair is bound about her head by a narrow band of gold with one jewel over her forehead. Her hair hangs loose behind, to well below her waist. As she passes, the grinning faces of two lepers appear in one of the entrances, and the head of the first leper, his face still concealed, rises from beside the steps, stares, and then slowly sinks out of sight.*

ISEULT *and her attendants enter the church and the doors close behind them.*

The stage remains empty for a moment.

The gate again opens and MARK, *accompanied by* DENOVALIN *and a few guards, walks across the stage and enters the church. As they pass, the lepers again show themselves and rattle their clappers. At the sound,* MARK *puts his hands to his ears, but* DENOVALIN *makes a half friendly, half contemptuous gesture in their direction. He is the last to enter the church and posts two men-at-arms at the door, one on each side.*

Several lepers come out and dance a jig and shake their clappers. Off stage can be heard the crier's bell. A few townsfolk come through the gate which has been left open. The lepers vanish. The church bell tolls three slow strokes.

A GIRL.

I want to see the queen close by.

A SECOND GIRL.

I'll strew
Fresh flowers in her path as she goes past.
My father made her once a pair of shoes

Of fine white satin, bound with clasps of gold
And crimson 'broidery. He says her feet
Are delicate and small; as white and slim
As are the Virgin Mary's.

OLD WOMAN.

Ay, and see
Where those white feet of hers have carried her.

A TOWNSMAN (*to a boy who has climbed onto the wall*).

Hey, thou! Come down from there! The wall
And rocks are full an hundred fathoms high,
So, if thou fall, thy howling will not help.

A GIRL.

Poor queen, I pity her. King Mark's too harsh.

A MAN.

She's made a cuckold of him.

OLD WOMAN.

Ay, and now
He's tossing her with those new horns of his!

A MAN (*to old woman, laughing*).

That's more than thou hast done to any man.

(*The town crier, dressed as a herald, comes through the gate. He walks to the middle of the stage and rings his bell. The people gather about. In a loud, dead voice:*

THE CRIER.

Hear ye! Hear ye! Hear ye! King Mark's decree.
"To-day at noon, because the King hath found
Her faithless, he will give his wife, Iseult,
As bride to all the lepers of Lubine,
A gift to do with as they will."
Hear ye!
"And any man who helps her shall be hung."
Hear ye! Hear ye! "Should God declare his will
As otherwise, and should the lepers leave
Iseult untouched, she shall be Queen again."
Hear ye! Hear ye! Hear ye! "And furthermore:
Tristram her lover, nephew to the King,
By entering the realm hath now transgressed
The King's decree. His life is forfeited.
Whoever brings him hither quick or dead
Shall have an hundred golden marks reward."
So saith the King; see that ye heed his will.
(THE CRIER *rings his bell and goes out through the gate.*)

A Girl.

He's gone about the streets all day and cried
Until my blood runs cold; and still he cries.
I know it all by heart.

A Man.

Ay, let him cry.
Sir Tristram is a wolf and ere he's caught
His claws will scratch them so that all their lives
They'll think thereon. I'd help him an' I could.

Young Man (*climbing onto the wall*).

I want to sit here when the lepers come;
'Twill be rare sport to see them take their bride.

(*The men-at-arms come down the steps and start to move the townsfolk toward the gate.*)

Man-At-Arms (*to young man*).

Come down, for none may stay within the court
To watch the lepers when they take the queen.
So go your ways, for Mark has granted this,
Since 'twas the only grace she asked.

A Man.

May none
Behold the lepers when they take the queen?

Another Man.

Why, then I came for nothing, all this way!

Man-At-Arms.

O, shame, thou beast; would'st gloat and make a show
Of that which one dreads but to think on? Fie!

(*The guards clear the court, close the gate and return to the steps.* Denovalin *comes out of the church, closing the door behind him.*)

Denovalin (*to the guards*).

Guard well the doors. Should any stranger come
Lay hold of him and quickly bring me word,
For I shall be on watch outside the gate.
(*goes toward the gate*)
I've had enough of man-made miracles.
And sure I am that Tristram's in the land,
And knows how matters are with his Iseult.
He's crafty, bold and strong. Already twice
He's saved her, making it the the while appear
An act of God. King Mark he may deceive;
Not me; my knowledge is a certitude.

This time, Iseult, I have thee, and I swear
None but the lepers of Lubine shall have
What thou so proudly hast refused to me.
(*goes out through the gate*)

First Man-At-Arms.

By God, I have no stomach for such deeds,
And watch the doors I will not; nor behold
The shaming of the Queen. And that man's soul
Is leprous though his body may be clean.
We'll call the lepers out and then we two
Will slip within the church. What sayest thou?

Second Man-At-Arms.

I am agreed.

First Man-At-Arms (*calling to the lepers*).

Come forth; the court is cleared!

(*The* Men-At-Arms *quietly open the door of the church and go in.*)

(*Two lepers furtively come out of their hovel and when they see that the court is empty, call to the others. In all, six lepers come out. One, a far bigger man than the rest, has a shock of red hair and a disheveled red beard which makes his face appear chalk-white. Instead of a hood, he wears a burlesque brass crown to indicate that he is the king of the group. The other five are all more or less crippled; one is on crutches, having lost both feet; one has lost a hand; another a foot; one wears a cloth diagonally across one eye and the upper part of his face; one has no teeth, and his mouth looks like a great hole when he laughs. All wear tattered, filthy rags which were once bright colored. They dance about grotesquely. While they are so occupied the* Strange Leper *comes up from the crypt, and, unnoticed by the others, sits on the lower steps. He slumps down and his face, except the eyes, is wholly hidden behind a fold of his garment.*)

First Leper.

I've filled my bed with flowers and new hay.

Second Leper.

It is the woman not the bed that counts.

Third Leper.

At noon to eat raw turnips; then at night
To have a Queen to sleep with in the straw.
(*He laughs uproariously.*)

Fourth Leper.

I want her first and all night long. The wench
They gave us last went mad before my turn.

FIFTH LEPER.
Much didst thou care that she was mad or not.
What grieved thee was that she escaped from thee
And threw herself adown the cliff.
FOURTH LEPER.
God's wounds!
That was a common wench; Iseult's a Queen.
I'll have her first and kill who hinders me.
EWAN (*the King of the Lepers*).
Be still, ye fools, and harken, or I'll pound
Your rotten bodies into rotten pulp.
I am your King. As such it is my right
To have the woman first; when I have done
The rest of you shall draw for her by lot.
Here are the lots. Come, draw. And he who draws
The longest straw shall have her after me.
SECOND LEPER (*pointing to the Strange Leper on the steps*).
Behold!
(*They all gather round the stranger.* EWAN *in front.*)
EWAN.
Who art thou, friend? A leper too?
STRANGE LEPER.
Ay, leprous to the soul.
EWAN.
Whence comest thou?
STRANGE LEPER.
From far; e'en from the land of broken vows.
EWAN.
What brought thee here?
STRANGE LEPER.
The past which will not die.
EWAN.
What is thy name?
STRANGE LEPER.
I have a name no more,
Unless ye call me the Forsworn.
EWAN.
Let's see
Thy face.
STRANGE LEPER.
I have no face; the leprosy
Destroyed my soul, my face, my name.

EWAN.

Thy words
Are strange and void of sense. Why cam'st thou here?

STRANGE LEPER.

To bide with lepers like myself; to share
Their sorrow and their shame.

FIRST LEPER.

Those will we share,
But not until a week hath passed. This week
We have a bride. Of her thou shalt not share.

STRANGE LEPER.

Ay, her I will not share. She's mine not yours.

SECOND LEPER.

Not ours? Whom Mark hath given us? Art mad?

STRANGE LEPER (*Throwing some gold pieces on the ground*).

I'll buy your bride; I need her more than you.
Here's gold; take gold and let me have Iseult.

EWAN.

Think'st thou I'd sell my love-night with Iseult
For gold? Thou hast not gold enough to still
My craving for her soft, white nakedness.

STRANGE LEPER.

What ye'll not give for gold I'll take with steel.

EWAN.

Dost threaten us? Begone. I'll smite thee dead.
(*All the lepers surge forward threateningly.*)

THE LEPERS (*all together*).

Away—Thou take our bride—We'll kill thee—Go.

(*The church bell begins to toll with slow, even strokes. The lepers recognizing the signal seem to forget the* STRANGE LEPER *in their joy of anticipation. They draw away and dance together.* THE STRANGE LEPER *remains where he has sat, crouched together, motionless.*)

THE LEPERS (*all together*).

Be still—She comes—We'll deal with him anon—
We want her now—Iseult—Our bride—Behold—

(*The door of the church opens and the* HANGMAN, *dressed in his conventional red suit, leads* ISEULT *out. The two* MEN-AT-ARMS *stand guard at each side of the door. When he reaches the bottom step the* HANGMAN *halts and speaks.* ISEULT *stands like a statue with eyes closed. The bell continues to toll.*)

HANGMAN.

Hear ye! Hear ye! Lepers of St. Lubine.
King Mark hath bid you gather here at noon
To hear his will and to receive a gift.
The King hath found his wife adulterous;
False in her oaths to him and unto God,
And now he gives her as a gift to you,
Ye lepers of Lubine. Take her and do
With her whatever ye may wish. She's yours.
Hear ye! Hear ye! Thus Mark hath bid me speak.

(*When he stops speaking he very respectfully removes* ISEULT'S *outer garment and she stands exposed, wearing only semi-transparent sleeveless, long, white shirt. He falls to his knees and takes the Queen's hand which he kisses.*)

And thou, O Queen, forgive me what I've done
And may Almighty God forgive me, too.
May God protect thee. May He grant to me
Forgetfulness of this grim duty done.

(*He goes up the steps and, followed by the two guards closes the door. The bell stops pealing. There is absolute silence.* ISEULT *stands motionless, her arms rigidly at her sides. Her eyes are closed. The Lepers seem stunned by her surpassing beauty and for an appreciable moment stare at her silently.*)

EWAN (*steps up to* ISEULT).

We are the lepers and I am their King
And thou our bride. By leper law it is
My Kingly privilege to have thee first.
I have made soft my couch, have plucked fresh flowers,
And bought much wine. Come to thy bridegroom, bride!
Until tomorrow thou art mine. So come.
I want thee now; why wait until the night?
I want to feel thy skin and then get drunk.
Come, sweet my bride.

(*He puts out his hand to take* ISEULT'S *arm. The* STRANGE LEPER *leaps in front of* ISEULT *and pushes* EWAN *back violently.*)

STRANGE LEPER.

Get back, thou thing of shame!

(*He throws a handful of gold coins to the lepers.*)

Scabs! Vultures! Curs, be off! If one of you
But speaks I'll trample you beneath my feet
And grind you in the dirt. Here's gold. Be off.

EWAN.

Who art thou that insults us thus? Take that!

(*He lunges at the* STRANGE LEPER *with his staff. The* STRANGE LEPER *parries the blow and knocks him senseless.* EWAN *falls and lies at the head of steps which lead to the crypt to the right of the main steps. The* STRANGE LEPER *then rushes at the remaining lepers and beats them with his staff. With cries of fear and pain they run and hobble until all have disappeared into their hovels. For a moment there is complete silence. The* STRANGE LEPER'S *hood has fallen back; his face appears for the first time; he wears a helmet of silver mail. After staring for a moment at* ISEULT *he goes slowly toward her, kneels and reverently lifts the hem of her white garment to his lips. She does not move and until toward the end of the scene she keeps her eyes closed.*)

STRANGE LEPER.

Iseult! (*anxiously, wonderingly and imploringly.*) Iseult!

ISEULT (*She throws back her head with a convulsive shudder of repulsion*).

Thou beast! Thou dreadful beast!
Thou rotting remnant of what once was man!

STRANGE LEPPER.

'Tis I who call.

ISEULT.

I know not who thou art.
If in thy loathsome carcass there still dwells
Some remnant of a man, slay me, I pray.
Slay quickly, but speak not.

STRANGE LEPER.

(*He rises to his feet, moves back a few steps, then kneels again and sits back on his heels*). Iseult!

ISEULT.

Be still.
And kill me now! They've left me not so much
As one small pin with which to kill myself.
I'll kneel before thee like a kitchen wench
And bless thy name, if thou'lt but kill me now!

STRANGE LEPER

Is all thy love for Tristram dead, Iseult?

ISEULT.

Thou speak'st and stare'st, but God shall punish thee
Because thou would'st not kill.

STRANGE LEPER.

Iseult, awake!
O, Golden One, I call in Tristram's name.

ISEULT.

I'll listen to thy sneering irony
If thou wilt kill me then! O, say that thou
Wilt kill me after thou hast railed thy fill
—That thou wilt come no nearer than thou art.

STRANGE LEPER.

Iseult, awake! Awake, Iseult, and speak.
And tell me if thou lovest Tristram still.

ISEULT.

Tristram was once my friend. Why dost thou use
The dagger of his name to prick mine heart?
Because I loved him once I'm here to-day.
Now kill me.

STRANGE LEPER.

Jesus help me! Hear me speak
Iseult, for I'm—
(*His voice breaks with a sob.*)
I'm Tristram's messenger.
I come from him, thine erstwhile friend!

ISEULT (*angrily*).

Would'st shame
Me in my shame? Thou beast!

STRANGE LEPER.

I'd save not shame.
Iseult, dost thou love Tristram still?

ISEULT (*Her voice is kindlier and somewhat curious*).

Thou art
His messenger? And art thou come, perchance,
To take me to him?
(*breaking out angrily*).
Does thy noble lord
Desire me, to give me as a gift
From some far land to his new bride? Am I
To sit within a cage and watch them kiss?
Listen the while he calls his wife Iseult?
Was this his sweet design, or does Iseult
The snowy-handed crave my golden hair
To make a pillow for voluptuous hours?
How strange that Tristram should so long for me

That he sends messengers! And will he lay
Us both within the self-same bed? Caress
And kiss us both throughout the night's long hours?
Is that his thought? In other days thy lord
Was less promiscuous in his desires!
(*in great passion*).
Now kill me, kill me, beast! I've lived too long.

STRANGE LEPER.

Iseult, dost thou not know me yet?

ISEULT.

What should
I know of thee, or in what roadside ditch
Lord Tristram found thee as he fled away
This morning through the Morois from a man
Who called upon him in my name to stand?

STRANGE LEPER.

O, judge him not too quickly, for he stood
When summoned in thy name, and waited there.

ISEULT (*ironically*).

He stood, say'st thou? Why then, I only dreamed
That he hath wed Iseult, whose hands are white?
I dreamed, perhaps, and sobbed but in my dreams?
His marriage and my tears were idle dreams?

STRANGE LEPER.

Be merciful, Iseult, on Tristram's soul.

(*He drops his head into his hands and is shaken by silent sobs. There is a moment of silence. The leper who until now has lain unconscious at the head of the steps leading to the crypt comes to his senses and quietly and unnoticed goes down the steps and disappears.* ISEULT *takes a few steps toward the* STRANGE LEPER *and for the first time during the act opens her eyes. She looks at the huddled figure of the* STRANGE LEPER, *but it is obvious that she is so disturbed that she sees nothing.*)

ISEULT.

Wast thou his servant when he still was true,
And took'st the plague from his diseased soul,
Grown leprous from his infidelity?
Thou thing that once wast man, I know thee not;
And if thy master Tristram stood here now,—
He whom I loved and who returned my love
With all the flame of youth, in years gone by,
If he stood here I should not know his face

Concealed behind the mask of cowardice
And faithlessness which he hath worn of late.
His perjury sticks to him like black slime!
Go, tell him that!—I hate his lying mask.
When first I knew and loved him he was true;
Clean was his honor, clean and very pure;
But now it's foul and God shall punish him.

(*The leper who disappeared into the crypt to the right of the steps, reappears from under them, coming up on the left side. Furtively, and unnoticed he limps to the gate and slips through it.*)

STRANGE LEPER

Iseult, great God hath punished him enough;
His soul is writhing in its agony
Before thy feet!

ISEULT.

His soul is leprous, ay!
And 'tis an awful thing when one's own soul
Is leprous grown! I loath and hate him now!

STRANGE LEPER (*leaping to his feet*).

Isuelt!

ISEULT (*wildly*).

Go call the vultures, call them forth!
I want to hide me in their plague-white arms.
To dance and love with them that I may flee
From Tristram's faithless soul which has betrayed
And shamed my love!

STRANGE LEPER.

God's mercy help him now,
For Tristram loves thee still in life, in death.

(*The voice of* DENOVALIN *is heard from outside the gate.*)

DENOVALIN.

Let none go out! Draw up the bridge, ye guards,
And close the castle gates! I'll catch the hound!

(ISEULT *staggers a few steps and collapses.*)

STRANGE LEPER.

Denovalin, Iseult, Denovalin!
Quick, hide thy nakedness within this cloak!

(*He picks up a cloak discarded by one of the lepers and covers her.*)

The hour has come, I'll kill this perjurer,
Then get me gone!

DENOVALIN (*rushes through the gate*).

Thou, there! Who art thou? Speak!
Thou hound, who brazenly dares set at naught
King Mark's decreed command!

STRANGE LEPER (*who has sprung up onto the steps*).

Denovalin,
A second time thou shalt not flee from me
As in the dawn today! Now guard thyself.

(*He draws his sword, springs at* DENOVALIN, *striking downward as he leaps.*) DENOVALIN *falls and the* STRANGE LEPER *swings himself onto the wall to the left. He throws off his lepers' cloak and stands against the sky clad in a coat of silver mail, shining in the sun, his sword high above his head.*)

DENOVALIN (*raising himself on his elbow*).

Tristram of Lyonesse! (*he collapses.*)

STRANGE LEPER.

Dost recognize
Him by his stroke? Then die, thou perjured cur!

(*He runs along the wall until he reaches the sentinel platform to the left of the gate. For a moment he looks over the wall.*)

God help me now, for only He can save!

(*He leaps from the wall. The stage remains empty for a moment.* ISEULT *lies motionless. The doors of the church open;* MEN-AT-ARMS, *followed by* MARK, BRANGAENE, PARANIS *and others come out slowly. They are not aware of* ISEULT *who is completely covered by the lepers' cloak, nor of* DENOVALIN *whose body is not directly visible from the steps.*)

FIRST MAN-AT-ARMS.

Why dost thou weep?

SECOND MAN-AT-ARMS.

I'm not ashamed. There's none
Save only Mark alone who does not weep.
I shudder when I think what has been done.

MARK (*after looking about the empty stage*).

Iseult is gone. God hath declared himself.
May He have mercy on her perjured soul.
Iseult is gone forever; I am free
From her adulterous smiles. So be it, then.
And yet.....and yet.....O, God, I loved her much!

(ISEULT *moves slightly and gives a low groan.*)

PARANIS (*going to where* ISEULT *lies*).

Here's one lies dead.

(*He pulls back the lepers' cloak and discloses* ISEULT *apparently dead.*)

Almighty God! The Queen!
The Queen is dead; the lepers killed the Queen.

BRANGAENE (*kneeling beside* ISEULT).

She is not dead; she breathes; she has no wounds.
The lepers have not touched her; she is pure.
God hath again declared her innocence.

FIRST MAN-AT-ARMS.

A wondrous thing; a judgment from on high.

SECOND MAN-AT-ARMS (*who has found* DENOVALIN'S *body*).

Here lies my lord Denovalin! He's dead.

FIRST MAN-AT-ARMS (*to* MARK *who stands staring at* ISEULT *as if petrified*).

The Queen lies here, unwounded and untouched;
And yonder lies my lord Denovalin.
He's dead; his wound still bleeds.

SECOND MAN-AT-ARMS.

I'll to the gate
And ask the guards if they have seen some sign,
Of any going in or coming forth,
Who might have done this deed, or heard some sound.
If not, then God hath wrought a miracle.

MARK (*in a voice of thundering command*).

I'll crucify the man that asks!
Tell me,
Did Lord Denovalin receive his wound
In front or from behind?

FIRST MAN-AT-ARMS.

Here at the throat.
The wound is small and deep, as though a bolt
Of lightning struck him there between the helm
And gorget.

PARANIS.

Lo, a miracle was done.
It was God's hand struck down Denovalin
Who falsely testified against the Queen.

MARK (*in a hard calm voice*).

The hangman shall forthwith strip off his arms
And hang them from the walls so that the sun
May shine thereon until they're purified.
The corpse he shall bind to a horse's tail

And drag it through the streets and let it lie,
That dogs and ravens may devour it.
(*to a* MAN-AT-ARMS).
Where are the Earls, the Sponsors of the Queen?
Sir Dinas, Lord of Lidan, is he here?

FIRST MAN-AT-ARMS.

They all rode from the gates an hour agone.

MARK.

Send forth the swiftest riders from the guards,
Pursue the Earls and bid them all return.
Bear them my greetings in all courtesy.
Bring me my horse that I myself may ride
To seek Lord Dinas, my most loyal friend.
(*He goes to where* ISEULT *still lies unconscious and for a moment looks down at her silently. Then he kneels beside her and bows his head. The church bell tolls slowly. He rises and speaks coldly and controlling himself with difficulty.*)
Let Queen Iseult be carried on that cloak
To her own rooms and place her on her couch;
Strew fresh plucked flowers round about her bed;
Sprinkle her robes with perfumes sweet and rare;
Then kneel ye down whenever she doth speak,
For she must be in some way sanctified
That God hath so declared his love for her.
(*almost shouting*).
And if she should be found in Tristram's bed
I'll kill the man who tells me of it, ay,
And let his body rot upon the ground.

CURTAIN

Acts IV and V will be printed in the next issue of *Poet Lore*, Vol. XLIII, No. 4.

A GROUP OF POEMS

By Katherine Dimick

GIFT

Jonquils, flaring among green blades—
Jonquils, gay and arrogant,
Demanding, taking, giving nothing—
Throbbing, pulsing, dancing—

These then are your gifts to me.

Violets lifting shyest eyes
Amid the deeper green of spreading leaves,
Violets, shrinking from the prying eyes of Day,
Tender violets, sighing, aching, giving;
Asking nothing but the right to give and give;
I offer you my violets,
Crush them slowly.

BIOGRAPHY

Someone will write the story of your life, perhaps.
He will write the date of your birth and your death
And fill the wasted pages in between
With deeds that you have done because you could not help yourself.
The world will know you liked ripe olives,
But will never guess that the livid fruit of olive trees
Suggested myrrh and incense,
Hot breezes, and the mystic East
To you.
The world will be told you spent long hours
In listening to music from the masters;
But the pagan roads into those secrets lands
Where you met heaven and hell in melody
Will not be mentioned in the tale.
Some one will tell of the nights you spent
In gazing at the star pronged skies.
But no pen will ever sing the star songs
You have known,
Nor all the pain of the red dawn.

The world will be told of your walks in the rain.
But your talks with the lightning and thunder
Will not brighten the story.
Some one will write about your love of solitude.
And will forget to tell of all the spangled thoughts
That rioted through your being.
Oh, some fool will write the story of your life, perhaps;
Fools always write of what they do not know;
And the world will learn the date of your birth
And the date of your death.

TO AUDRÉ

The Daughters of the Night
Thrust thread of Raphael's soul
Into their needles;
And Clotho stole Corregio's touch
To weave its fibers into white and throbbing patterns.
Lachesis held the singing heart of Cimabue,
While Atropos snipped the gleaming strings
That trembled with immortal whisperings
And bound them fast in gold embroidery
Upon the stolen veil that once had shrouded Steen.
Spinning, twisting, cutting,
Clotho, Lachesis, Atropos,
Fashioned a soul too delicate
For touch of human fingers,
And Zeus, beholding, feared for it
Until he sent the Oreads
To clothe it in a mortal body.
They stole the raven hair of Night,
They snatched the flush from Bacchus' cheeks
And plucked the mystery from the dim veiled eyes of Hestia.
Diana offered hands as slender as the reeds of Pan,
While Venus sent her glistening limbs, and red, red lips.
Oh, the Fates were drunken from the scent of Hyacinth
And robbed the hands of Hogarth of his brush;
They swept da Vinci's easel from before him,
They laid them at your feet and bowed their heads
To worship this new being they had made.
And Clotho spun,
Lachesis twisted,
And Atropos broke her scissors on your soul.

BOOK OF PRAISES*

THE PSALMS**

By John L. Patterson

The Psalms consist of a collection of religious lyrical poems by different authors and of different dates. Many of the Psalms were composed at a very early period and all of them have survived by selection because of their excellence. Lyric poetry originally meant poetry composed for accompaniment by the lyre. The term, however, has persisted, taken on a much wider significance, and lost its precision of meaning. Professor Barrett Wendell in defining lyrical poetry once divided it into four groups:

1. Poems intended for musical accompaniment.
2. Poems whose conventional form is traceable to former musical conditions.
3. Poems which appeal to the ear as subtly musical.
4. Poems which are expressive of the personal emotions of the author.

Poetry as well as music had its origin in the march or the dance. In order to emphasize the more prominent, though theoretically no heavier, tread of the left foot, clapping of the hands was probably first used and followed by the invention of some crude form of drum for the purpose The division of the time into equal parts by the clapping of the hands or the beating of the drum gave rise to rhythmical movement in both poetry and music. Some scholars are thus of the opinion that the earliest form of musical instrument was the drum, although others hold that the horn or trumpet was the earliest instrument. At any rate, out of the drum the lyre was gradually evolved. The Greek legend about the origin of the lyre is that the god Apollo invented it by scooping out the flesh from a tortoise shell and stringing the shell with the tendons of the animal itself. Morse, a distinguished modern archeologist, discovered ancient Aztec manuscripts in which there was a crude drawing of a musician beating upon a tortoise shell drum.

Whatever the origin of the lyre, we know that the Psalms were intended to be accompanied by some instrument of the kind,

*_Sepher Tehillim_—A general Hebrew title.

**Acknowledgement is made to the Modern Readers' Bible (Moulton); A Book about the English Bible (Penniman), and other authorities consulted.

whether we call it timbrel, harp, lyre, lute, psaltery, or by some other name, and that the Psalms belong to our first class of lyrical poetry—poems intended for musical accompaniment.

The Psalms as we have them are believed to have formed the liturgy of the second Temple, although we should remember that many of them were of a much older date and may have been the folk songs, so to speak, of a primitive religious Hebrew people, used to express their emotions on various important occasions. The first Temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar just before the Babylonian Captivity, according to some scholars, about 605-536 B. C. After the restoration of the Jewish State, by authorization of Cyrus the Great, who began to reign over the Persians about 559 B. C., the second Temple was begun but not finished until the later reign of Darius. This Temple was partly reconstructed by Herod the Great in 20 B. C. and was finally destroyed by the Romans under Titus in 70 A. D.

The Psalms as sung in the liturgy of the second Temple are usually given as 150 in number and divided in the Hebrew into five groups: 1-41, 42-72, 73-89, 90-106, 107-150. Each of these divisions ends with a doxology or short song of praise of Jehovah, but the doxologies at the close of 72 and 106 are integral parts of the poems themselves, while the others are not. For this reason, among others, scholars are inclined to accept the Rabbinical tradition that the division has been imitated from the Pentateuch and so to separate the Psalms into three groups as the natural division: 1-41, 42-89, 90-150. The first division consists of Psalms almost all of which are attributed to David.

In the second division there are some Psalms of David between two groups of Asaph. If these Psalms of David are transposed to a position immediately after 41, the second division will consist of Psalms of David, The Sons of Korah, Asaph, and a few other authors in succession. The third division contains the Great Chorals and Liturgies of uncertain authorship. Scholars do not agree on the exact division and enumeration of the Psalms. The sources of their information are derived chiefly from the Hebrew manuscripts, the Greek translation, *Septuagint*, or the Latin translation, *Vulgate*. This fact will account for a slight difference in the classification of the Psalms in the Bibles of various churches.

Of the 150 Psalms, 73 are attributed to David, 12 to Asaph, 11 to the Sons of Korah, 2 to Solomon, 1 to Moses, 1 to Ethan, and 50 are anonymous.

While all the Psalms are of interest to us, some of them have a special interest. For example, the group 113-118 is called the Egyptian Hallel. These Psalms consist of songs of praise of Jehovah and of gratitude for the deliverance out of Egypt. They are sung by the Jews at the celebration of the Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, Dedication, and New Moons, except New Year. They have an added sacred interest for Christians because it is believed that they were the "hymn" sung by the Christ and his Disciples at the Last Supper the evening before the crucifixion (Matthew 26:30).

Psalms 120-134 are called Songs of Ascents and are supposed to have been sung by the Jewish people on their annual pilgrimages up to Jerusalem. Psalm 24 is especially interesting because it is thought to have been composed by David at the very height of his career, when, after years of struggle and warfare, he finally entered Jerusalem in triumph. It was for his dancing violently before Jehovah on the occasion that he was rebuked by his wife Michal, Saul's daughter.

It is only within recent times that much attention has been given to the literary structure of the Psalms. Before that time there was little distinction made between prose and poetry.

I know that many have often wondered, as I have done, at the frequent changes of pronouns in the Psalms. One line of a Psalm may contain the pronoun "I" and be followed immediately or almost immediately by another line containing "We" or some other pronoun. Modern scholars believe that the changes of pronouns usually indicate also changes of speakers and that some of the Psalms were composed in the form of lyrical dialogues and even of lyrical dramas. The dramatic Psalms are sometimes composed in stanzas that may be compared to Greek strophes and antistrophes. In the antistrophic structure the strophe was sung and perhaps danced by a semi-chorus and was followed by an antistrophe sung and danced by a second semi-chorus responsively. The music and the dance if used, however, were not extraneous ornamentations, but were integral parts of the performance. The dances were mimetic and interpretative and served to emphasize and even visualize the progress of the dramatic action. In ancient dramatic performances the music, poetry, and dance formed a triad of art, each part of which was dependent on the other and all of them essential to the fullest presentation of the meaning.

Poetry in most languages is expressed by a metrical arrange-

ment of words and syllables. Hebrew poetry does not depend so much on the metrical arrangement as it does on parallelism of thought. One line of Hebrew poetry is followed by a second or more, in which the thought of the first is elaborated or is compared or contrasted with that of the first. The poetic effect is thus made by the harmony and balance of the thought and sense rather than by an artificial metrical arrangement. When poetry in most foreign languages is translated literally into English, it loses its poetic impression, but the Hebrew poetry when thus translated carried over its poetic impression into the translation, and the translation itself still strikes the ear as subtly musical and so belongs to our third division of lyrical poetry—poems which appeal to the ear as subtly musical.

In order to explain more fully the meaning of what I have said, I quote two of the Psalms* and point out the changes of scenes and speakers as they may be inferred from the internal evidence.

DAVID'S TRIUMPH

Psalm XXIV

I. (*At the foot of the Hill.*)

1st Semi-chorus

"The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof:
The world and they that dwell therein.
For he hath founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the floods.
Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?
And who shall stand in the holy place?"

2nd Semi-chorus

"He that hath clean hands and a pure heart;
Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity,
And hath not sworn deceitfully.
He shall receive a blessing from the Lord,
And righteousness from the Lord of his salvation.
This is the generation of them that seek after him,
That seek thy face, O God of Jacob."

II. (*Before the gates*)

1st semi-chorus

"Lift up your heads O ye gates;
And be ye lift up, ye ancient doors;
And the King of Glory shall come in."

*Arranged generally according to Moulton.

2ND SEMI-CHORUS
"Who is the King of Glory?"
1ST SEMI-CHORUS
"The Lord strong and mighty,
The Lord mighty in battle."
1ST SEMI-CHORUS
"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
Yea, lift them up, ye ancient doors;
And the King of Glory shall come in."
2ND SEMI-CHORUS
"Who is this King of Glory?"
1ST SEMI-CHORUS
"The Lord of Hosts,
He is the King of Glory."
(*Gates open: procession enters.*)

PSALM II.

(*Song of the Lord's Anointed*)

SCENES: 1. Mustering of rebellious nations.
2. Council of Kings.
3. Heaven (Jehovah on His throne).
4. Hill of Zion.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS:
"Why do the nations rage,
And the peoples meditate a vain thing?
The kings of the earth set themselves, and the
rulers take counsel together,
Against the Lord, and against his Anointed:"
KINGS: "Let us break their bonds asunder,
And cast away their cords from us."
LEADER OF THE CHORUS:
He that sitteth in the heavens will laugh:
The Lord will have them in derision,
Then will he speak unto them in his wrath,
And vex them in his sore displeasure:"
JEHOVAH:
"Yet I have set my King
Upon my holy hill of Zion."
ANOINTED KING:
"I will tell of the decree:
The Lord said unto me,
Thou art my son;
This day have I begotten thee.
Ask of me, and I will give the nations for
thine inheritance,
And the uttermost parts of the earth for thy
possession.
Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;
Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's
vessel."

LEADER OF THE CHORUS:

"Now therefore be wise, O ye kings;
Be instructed ye judges of the earth.
Serve the Lord with fear,
And rejoice with tembling.
Kiss the son, lest he be angry,
And ye perish in the way,
For his wrath will soon be kindled.
Blessed are all they that take refuge
in Him."

In conclusion, it is interesting to know that while some of the Psalms were being composed, the Greek poet Anacreon was composing lyrics of an entirely different nature in almost the same quarter of the globe. The Greek has given us much of all that is beautiful in lyrical poetry expressive of material pleasures and transient physical emotions. The Hebrew has risen to far sublimer heights and painted for us in terms of enduring loveliness the pleasures and emotions of the spiritual and eternal.

SONG FOR DAVID

By MARGARET WARD

Leave your plowing, David.
The sun is setting in rose-red fire,
The crickets are chattering beside the mire,
The hound howls doleful with his sire.
Leave your plowing, David.

Leave your cattle, David.
The stars are swirling now on high,
The dusk has faded over the rye,
The winds are curling and daring to sigh.
Leave your cattle, David.

Oh, leave your reading, David.
The sky is arching her blackest blue,
The woods are rustling in silver hue,
And I am waiting there for you.
Oh, leave your reading, David.

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